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# INDIA TODAY

**INDIA'S POPULATION POLICY**

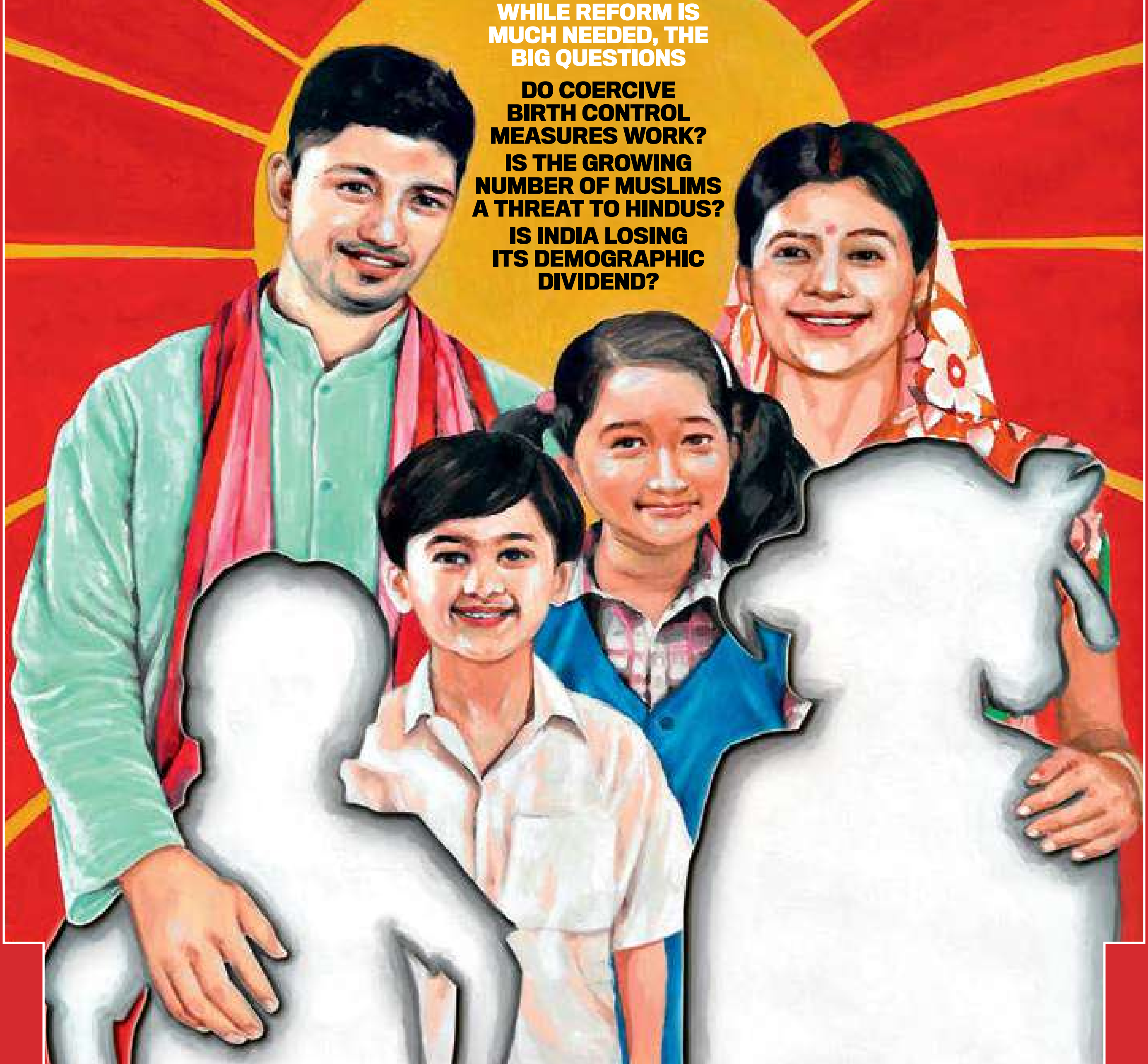
# MYTHS AND REALITY

**WHILE REFORM IS MUCH NEEDED, THE BIG QUESTIONS**

**DO COERCIVE BIRTH CONTROL MEASURES WORK?**

**IS THE GROWING NUMBER OF MUSLIMS A THREAT TO HINDUS?**

**IS INDIA LOSING ITS DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND?**



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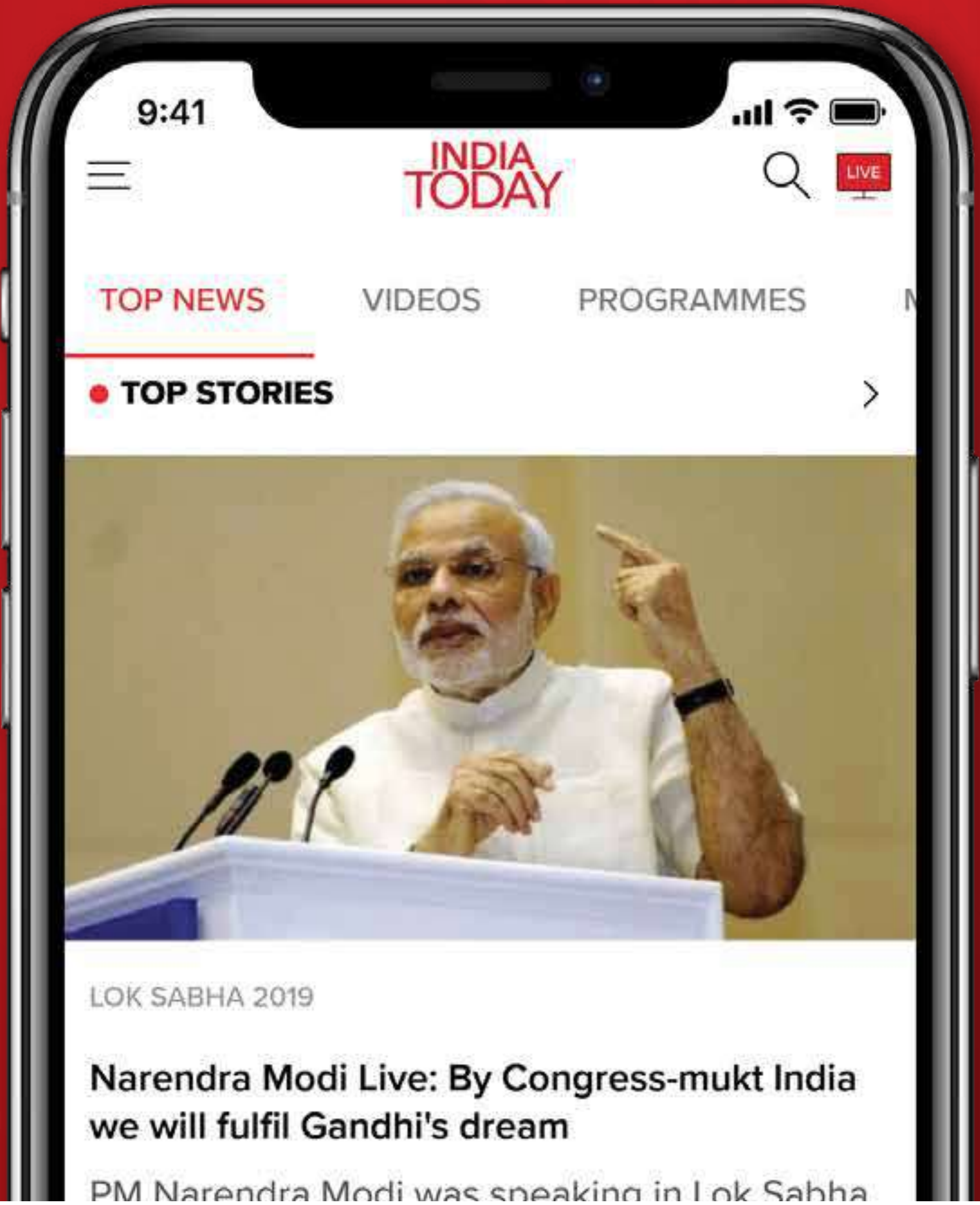
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## FROM THE
# EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In the seventh edition of this magazine on March 15, 1976, we carried a cover story on India's growing population and how it should be controlled. This was during the Emergency and at that time, the Congress party announced a National Population Policy, which detailed population control measures. The intention was noble but the implementation brutal. During the Emergency, most Opposition leaders were incarcerated. The government had untrammelled powers and went about implementing the sterilisation programme with a heavy hand. Doctors and bureaucrats roamed the countryside with sterilisation targets. Between 1976 and 1977, over eight million people were sterilised, some of them forcibly. This became a huge political issue in the 1977 general election in which the Congress party suffered a dramatic loss and Mrs Indira Gandhi lost her seat too. The coercive family planning campaign was widely seen as a major factor in the Congress defeat. That defeat seemed to have traumatised India's political class and population control became an unspeakable term in the national discourse.

March 15, 1976 cover

On July 11 this year, the subject sprung back into the national consciousness when Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath unveiled his state's new population control policy to reduce the population growth rate to 2.1 per cent over the next decade. The policy incentivises the two-child norm both for government employees and private citizens. In 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had flagged the country's population challenge in his Independence Day speech and warned that a 'population explosion' could cause problems in the future. Modi recommended that both the Centre and the states launch measures to tackle the problem. However, Yogi Adityanath's policy announcement in the run-up to the UP elections, due early next year, has sparked a polemical political battle, with the Opposition parties accusing the state government of using the issue to polarise voters on religious lines.

We are projected to overtake China as the most populous country by 2027. The brouhaha over UP's announcement has raised fresh questions about India's population growth and its policies. Our cover story, 'India's Population Policy: Myths and Reality', written by Deputy Editors Kaushik Deka and Shwweta Punj and Senior Associate Editor Sonali Acharjee, answers the big questions around this debate. Is the population growth rate of Muslims a serious threat to Hindus? Is India still facing a population explosion? Are coercive methods, like those proposed by the UP government and currently prevalent in other states, deterrents? Is there a risk that India could lose the advantages of a young labour force—the so-called demographic dividend—if it pursues an aggressive population control policy? Each of these questions has several associated myths that warrant a reality check.

The one fear that Muslims will overtake Hindus in numbers is not based on facts. Population growth rates of all religious communities, including Hindus and Muslims, are declining. Yet, while UP and Assam have been voluble about demographic worries, the measures they have taken or proposed are no different from what 11 other states, such as Maharashtra, have enacted in the past. There is, fortunately, nationwide acceptance of voluntary population control measures. Nitish Kumar, the chief minister of Bihar, India's third most populous state, has argued that focusing on women's education can decrease the fertility rate. Economic development and women's empowerment, as we've discovered, are effective contraceptives.

While it is necessary to check population growth, coercion rarely works. China's strict one-child policy of the 1970s resulted in sex-selective abortions, depressed fertility levels, irreversible population ageing, labour shortages and an economic slowdown. China abandoned the one-child norm in 2016 and is now officially encouraging a three-child policy. Experts we spoke to are in agreement that instead of a punitive exclusionary approach, the focus should be on sensible, inclusive measures, like spreading education and awareness about family planning, making contraception options easily available, incentivising later marriages and childbirths, and promoting women's participation in the labour force. Short-term electoral gains should never dictate any approach to population control.

Development remains the best contraceptive and demographics is inseparable from economics. India is witnessing a demographic dividend—with an average age of 29 years, we will, by 2026, have the world's youngest population. Young demography propels growth and creates demand. The Economic Survey of 2018-19 notes a slowdown in population growth but a significant increase in the share of the working-age population this decade. The national Total Fertility Rate will be below replacement levels this year itself. Still, the working-age population would grow by roughly 9.7 million people per year between 2021 and 2031 and 4.2 million per year between 2031 and 2041.

All the economists we spoke to emphasised the need to harness our demographic dividend by keeping our people gainfully employed and raising their productivity. This is clearly not happening now because 41 per cent of our workforce is still engaged in agriculture, which contributes only 15 per cent to the GDP. Not to forget that India has the maximum number of poor people in the world—364 million or 28 per cent of our population. If we don't address the issue of population growth in consonance with economic prosperity, we will only be adding to people's misery. This needs to be done without encroaching on the individual's civil liberty, as was seen during the Emergency. We also need to avoid unintended consequences of population control like female infanticide. A delicate balance must be struck.

We need to look at the ideal population figure that can be supported by our resources and work towards that. Without a holistic approach to our population problem, India's demographic dividend remains in danger of becoming a demographic disaster. To ensure that does not happen, population planning must remain a subject of continuous public discourse. I am glad that taboo has been broken.

*(Aroon Purie)*

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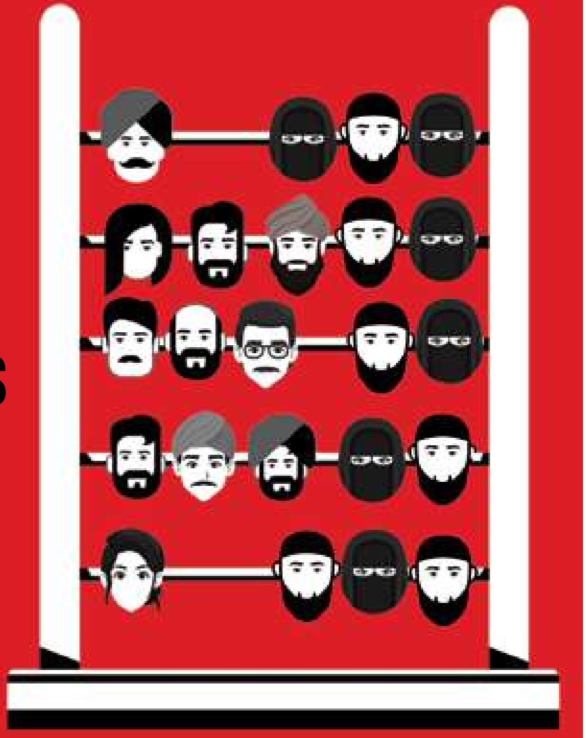

*Illustration by* NILANJAN DAS

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# UPFRONT

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**CHANGING FORTUNES**
Punjab PCC chief Navjot Singh Sidhu with his supporters at his residence in Patiala on July 19 (left); Punjab CM Amarinder Singh addresses the media on July 6

ANI

PUNJAB CONGRESS

# A DANGEROUS GAMBLE

**By Anilesh S. Mahajan**

Late in the day on Sunday, July 18, the All India Congress Committee (AICC) appointed cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu to the post of Punjab PCC (Pradesh Congress Committee) chief. This marked a watershed in the protracted tussle for supremacy between Sidhu and Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, and is being read in some quarters as the beginning of the end of the Capt. Amarinder Singh era in Punjab. With assembly polls less than a year away, some say the AICC's decision to promote Sidhu despite the CM's fierce protests means it is unlikely that Amarinder Singh will lead the Congress campaign to win another term in February 2022.

Before the announcement, Congress general secretary and Punjab in-charge Harish Rawat flew to Chandigarh to break the news to the chief minister. Though Amarinder Singh said he would make his peace with the AICC's decision, he also demanded an unconditional public apology from Sidhu for badmouthing his government. Even if this apology is tendered, it is unlikely the two will be able to work together—there is too much bad blood between them. This factionalism was on full display on July 19, when Amarinder Singh and Sidhu held widely publicised meetings with supporters in a show of strength.

Political commentators also draw attention to the fact that the AICC decision was at the behest of the Gandhis, more specifically, siblings Rahul and Priyanka, both of whom support Sidhu and have directed their loyalists to back him up. This was visible in former Youth Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring driving Sidhu to various meetings in the days before the AICC announced its decision. It also reflects in the four new working presidents elevated alongside Sidhu—Sukhwinder Singh Danny, Sangat Singh Gilzian, Kuljit Singh Nagra and Pawan Goel. While they might have been seen as counterweights to Sidhu, they are in fact all political lightweights and Gandhi loyalists. This is also the first time in almost four decades that the Gandhi family has attempted to personally direct the affairs of the party's Punjab unit. However, sidelining Amarinder Singh is a major risk—while Sidhu has spent 17 years in politics, he has neither the chief minister's stature nor reputation as a team player.

Sidhu's camp has been portraying his appointment as PCC chief as a generational shift in the state's politics. This is bad news for other senior Congress leaders in Punjab, such as Rajya Sabha MP Partap Singh Bajwa, Mohinder Singh Kaypee and Sukhjinder Randhawa, all of whom likely believed they were next in line whenever Amarinder Singh hung up his boots. For now, the Congress is trying its hand at engineering a winning caste formula for the coming elections. The state's politics is heavily dominated by Jat Sikhs—of Punjab's 13 MPs in the Lok Sabha, eight are Jat Sikhs, four are Dalits and one, Manish Tewari, is a Brahmin. There is a discernible political undercurrent in the state against this skew—in a letter to Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, Rajya Sabha MP Shamsher Singh Dullo pointed out that the CM, the new PCC chief, the two AICC secretaries from Punjab and the chief of the state's Youth Congress were all Jat Sikhs, arguing that the new PCC chief should have come from the Dalit community. Dullo has also made it clear that while he has no particular affection for the chief minister, he does not support Sidhu. Many other party leaders too have privately expressed their reservations about Sidhu. This has lent weight to the idea that while Amarinder Singh may be down, he is not out.

What adds to this belief is that few party MLAs have expressed support for Sidhu. For instance, while the former cricketer met with many dissenting members of the Amarinder Singh cabinet at minister Tript Rajinder Singh Bajwa's official residence in the state capital on July 19, he was dismayed to find that many of those ministers went on to attend the meeting held by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh at his farmhouse on the outskirts of Chandigarh.

The personality war is obviously bad news for the Congress. The party is already down to ruling just three states, and retaining Punjab in 2022 is crucial to stay relevant as a national force. This is the only state in which it managed to resist the Modi wave in the Lok Sabha elections of 2014 and 2019. Some observers believe the Congress high command may have decided to back Sidhu believing in his ability to pull crowds, his celebrity image and in the hope that his charisma will help the Congress battle anti-incumbency in the 2022 election.

**Some believe Sidhu's elevation to PCC chief is a result of Amarinder Singh's rocky relationship with Rahul Gandhi—in the 2012 and 2017 assembly elections in Punjab, Rahul was reportedly unwilling to back Amarinder Singh as chief minister**

Others see another reason for the change of guard—the rocky relationship between Amarinder Singh and Rahul Gandhi. In both the 2012 and 2017 assembly elections, Rahul was reportedly reluctant to back Amarinder Singh as chief minister, with Congress chief Sonia Gandhi having to intervene on both occasions. However, the chief minister's political stature speaks for itself—in 2014, when several top Congress leaders like P. Chidambaram and Manish Tewari refused to contest the polls, Amarinder Singh defeated the BJP's Arun Jaitley in the battle for Amritsar with no help from the party's national leadership. (Incidentally, Jaitley had replaced Sidhu—then a BJP member—for the polls.) Then, in the 2017 assembly election, Amarinder Singh ran and won his campaign on the tagline 'Captain *di sarkar* (the Captain's government)'.

This is not to say that the chief minister faces no political challenges—there is certainly anti-incumbency sentiment against his government. Several legislators have complained that he runs his administration like a *rajshahi* (kingdom), not a *lokshahi* (democracy). He has been criticised for depending on a small coterie of bureaucrats and advisors rather than legislators, remaining inaccessible to other political leaders. This is possibly another reason the Congress high command is betting on Sidhu—it believes he can reset the state unit and energise party workers. But the highly abrasive battle between Amarinder Singh and Sidhu has its consequences too, and in the worst-case scenario might even split the party.

There is a lot of uncertainty about what comes next, given the state's complex political environment. Hindus are another major group in Punjab, and they are sympathetic to Amarinder Singh—his service in the Army and his focus on nationalist issues has kept them interested in the Congress. Sidhu, on the other hand, is regarded with suspicion, thanks to controversial public gestures like when he hugged Pakistan Army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa while attending Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's swearing-in ceremony, or his silence on attacks by extremists on Hindu businessmen and traders. Hindu voters dominate 45 of the state's 117 assembly seats, making them highly significant in electoral calculations.

While confusion reigns in the Congress, the Akali Dal and the Aam Aadmi Party have an open field to gain space in rural Punjab, with the BJP also trying to make inroads. Sidhu's appointment is a big gamble and the Congress has a lot a lose—both in the state and beyond it—if it is not able to quickly settle matters in its Punjab unit. ■

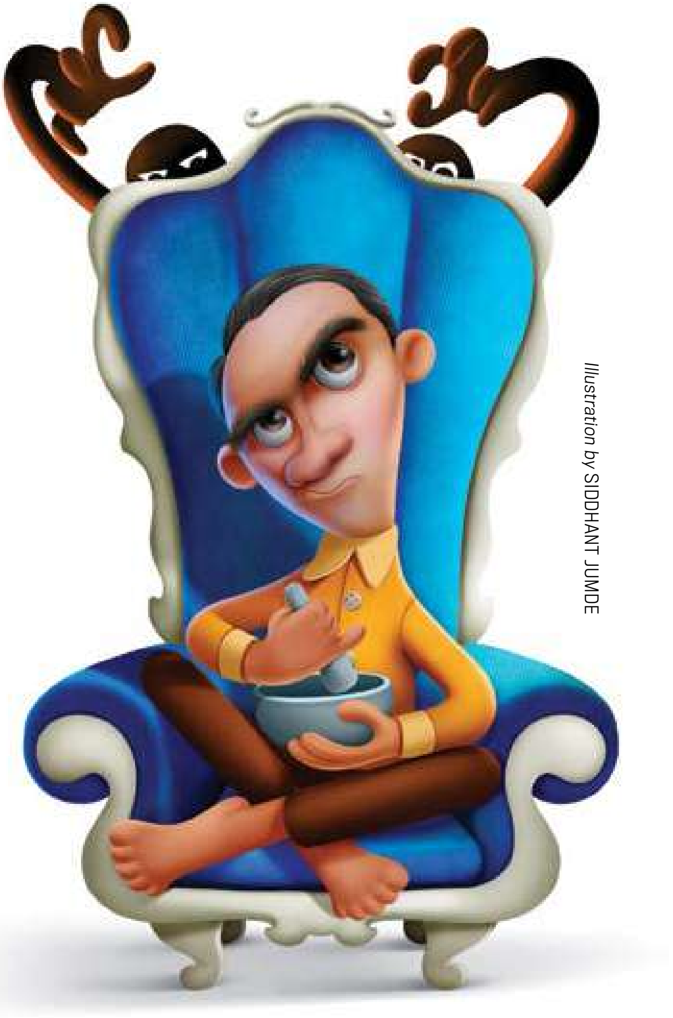


Illustration by SIDDHANT JUMDE

GLASSHOUSE

## A LITTLE INSURANCE

The assembly elections in Goa are still seven months away, but two of the state's prominent politicians—the low-profile Shripad Naik, Union minister of state for tourism, and the ambitious Vishwajit Rane, state health minister and member of the BJP's state core committee—have their eyes set on the chief minister's chair. These challengers are possibly what inspired sitting chief minister **Pramod Sawant's** recent two-day trip to Delhi, where he, along with his supporters, met top BJP leaders B.L. Santhosh and Nitin Gadkari. As an Ayurveda practitioner, Sawant knows a thing or two about preventive medicine.

VIKRAM SHARMA

## Out of Favour

Noted Urdu poet **Munawwar Rana** recently threatened to leave Lucknow if Yogi Adityanath were to become chief minister of Uttar Pradesh again after the 2022 assembly election. Interestingly, Rana was one of Yogi's biggest supporters in 2017, but after the state police booked his son Tabrez in a land dispute case, the poet is no longer inclined to look favourably upon the saffron-clad leader. Hell hath no fury like a poet scorned.

*—Sandeep Unnithan with Kiran D. Tare, Ashish Misra, Amitabh Srivastava and Romita Datta*

## MOVING ON IN LIFE

The Janata Dal (United) may get a new president soon. Current party president **Ram Chandra Prasad Singh** was recently named the new Union minister for steel. Before anyone can point a finger, the IAS officer-turned-politician has indicated his willingness to step down as party president. Who will replace him? The Patna grapevine has it that it might be Upendra Kushwaha, who returned to the JD(U) in March, merging his eight-year-old RLSP with Nitish Kumar's party.

ANI

## NEW GURUS

A university in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, recently introduced a book by yoga guru Baba Ramdev in its syllabus. Soon after, the state government removed a story by Rabindranath Tagore from its higher secondary school syllabus. Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MP **Sukhendu Sekhar Roy** puts it on the BJP. Fuming over the decision, he said: "If they can replace Tagore with Ramdev, I have no doubt they will include Asaram Bapu in their syllabus next."

BIHAR

# A BRUSH WITH TERROR

**By Amitabh Srivastava**

A parcel of readymade garments exploded and caught fire at the Darbhanga railway station in Bihar on June 17, soon after it had been offloaded from the Secunderabad-Darbhanga Express. Investigations showed the consignment had been booked in Secunderabad on June 15 in the name of Mohd. Sufiyaan, who the police believe works overseas, by forging his identity documents.

An examination of the explosives used in the IED (improvised explosive device) blast revealed the plot. Police sources say a glass bottle containing two lethal blasting agents, colloquially known as 'blasting oils', had been packed inside the parcel. A piece of hard cardboard—placed as a separator between the chemicals—was supposed to give way within the first few hours of the train journey, triggering a powerful explosion on the moving train. Luckily, some of the chemicals had leaked into the newspapers used to wrap the bottle and the garments, reducing the intensity of the blast at the Darbhanga station. No loss of life or injuries to people was reported.

Police sources say a similar botch-up in handling explosives by operatives behind the July 2013 serial blasts near the Mahabodhi temple in Bodh Gaya had saved many lives. The IEDs, they say, had been planted vertically, instead of horizontally, reducing the sideways impact of the explosions. Otherwise, the IEDs were so powerful that one of them, placed under a bus, had left a huge crater in the ground while ripping through the vehicle's floor and blowing off a part of its roof.

The Darbhanga case was suspected to be an act of terror and handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on June 24. Sifting through hours of CCTV footage from the Secunderabad railway station, the NIA identified two suspects—Mohd. Imran Malik and his brother Mohd. Nasir Malik. They were spotted getting off a taxi at the station, a parcel in hand, say police sources.

Imran and Nasir were arrested on June 30 from Nampally in Hyderabad. Sources say the duo, natives of Shamli district in Uttar Pradesh, has links with Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) handlers and used to interact with them through encrypted communication platforms.

**POLICE BELIEVE THE BLAST SUSPECTS MAY HAVE HAD THE SUPPORT OF TERROR MODULES IN DARBHANGA AND NEPAL**

SANTOSH KUMAR/ GETTY IMAGES

**JOINING THE DOTS**
The NIA team in Patna with a Darbhanga blast suspect arrested from Uttar Pradesh

According to the police, Nasir ran a garments business in Hyderabad for over two decades. He and Imran allegedly assembled the IED, concealed it in a parcel and booked it for dispatch to Darbhanga on the train. "The aim was to cause an explosion and fire on a moving passenger train to ensure heavy loss of life and property. Nasir had visited Pakistan in 2012 to receive LeT training in making IEDs from locally available chemicals," says an NIA statement on the case.

The agency made two more arrests on July 2 from Shamli—Mohd. Salim Ahmed and his son Kafeel Ahmed, residents of Kairana in the district. The NIA claims the four suspects, who are lodged in Patna's Beur jail, had masterminded the bombing in February at Salim's home. Salim is allegedly a close associate of LeT operative Iqbal Kana in Pakistan. He channelled the funds sent by Kana for the terror act.

According to the police, the fact that blood relatives were roped in for the Darbhanga blast is a pointer that their handlers wanted to maintain utmost secrecy about the plot. Police officials say Darbhanga, at one point, was home to an Indian Mujahideen (IM) terror module while Madhubani, about 40 km from Darbhanga and very close to the Nepal border, has in the past been a recruiting centre and hideout for terror operatives.

The districts of Sitamarhi, Araria and Kishanganj near Nepal have also served as safe havens for IM terrorists. Since 2006, over a dozen terror suspects have been arrested from the region. This includes the May 2012 capture of Darbhanga resident Kafeel Akhtar by the Karnataka police in connection with the blast at the Chinnaswamy cricket stadium in Bengaluru in April 2010. In 2008-09, IM co-founder Yasin Bhatkal allegedly raised a terror module in Darbhanga and Madhubani with a dozen recruits. This was revealed after his arrest in August 2013. In September 2017, Tauseef alias Atik Khan, the mastermind of the 2008 Ahmedabad serial blasts that killed 56 people and left over 200 injured, was arrested from Bihar's Gaya district. The engineering graduate, who has 39 cases against him, worked as a school teacher in a Gaya village.

The Darbhanga blast raises several questions. It is the first terror incident to strike Bihar since the October 2013 crude bomb blasts at a BJP rally in Patna, which left at least five people dead and many injured. The IM is suspected to be behind the attack. Bihar police officials believe the Darbhanga-bound train from Secunderabad could not have been picked randomly but they didn't hazard any theories. "Did the suspects have local support? Does the incident have anything to do with the terror modules operating from Nepal? These are the questions the NIA will need to look into," says a police official. ■

## NOT THE FIRST TIME

**July 2006-May 2012**

Over a dozen suspects were arrested by various agencies, including the Mumbai ATS and Delhi Police, from Bihar for alleged involvement in terror cases, including the German Bakery blast in Pune (Feb. 2010), Chinnaswamy Stadium blast in Bengaluru (Apr. 2010) and the shooting at Delhi's Jama Masjid (Sep. 2010). Six of those arrested were from Madhubani district

**July 2013**

Serial blasts targeted the Mahabodhi temple in Bodh Gaya. Ten bombs went off around the complex while three were defused. Two people were injured. In May 2018, the NIA court in Patna sentenced all five accused in the case to life imprisonment

**August 2013**

Indian Mujahideen (IM) co-founder Yasin Bhatkal, after his arrest, admitted to spending a few months in Darbhanga and Madhubani in 2008-09 and, posing as a homeopath, raising a terror module with a dozen recruits

**October 2013**

A series of blasts rocked the BJP's Hunkar rally in Patna. Five people were killed and dozens injured. The IM was blamed for the attack

**September 2017**

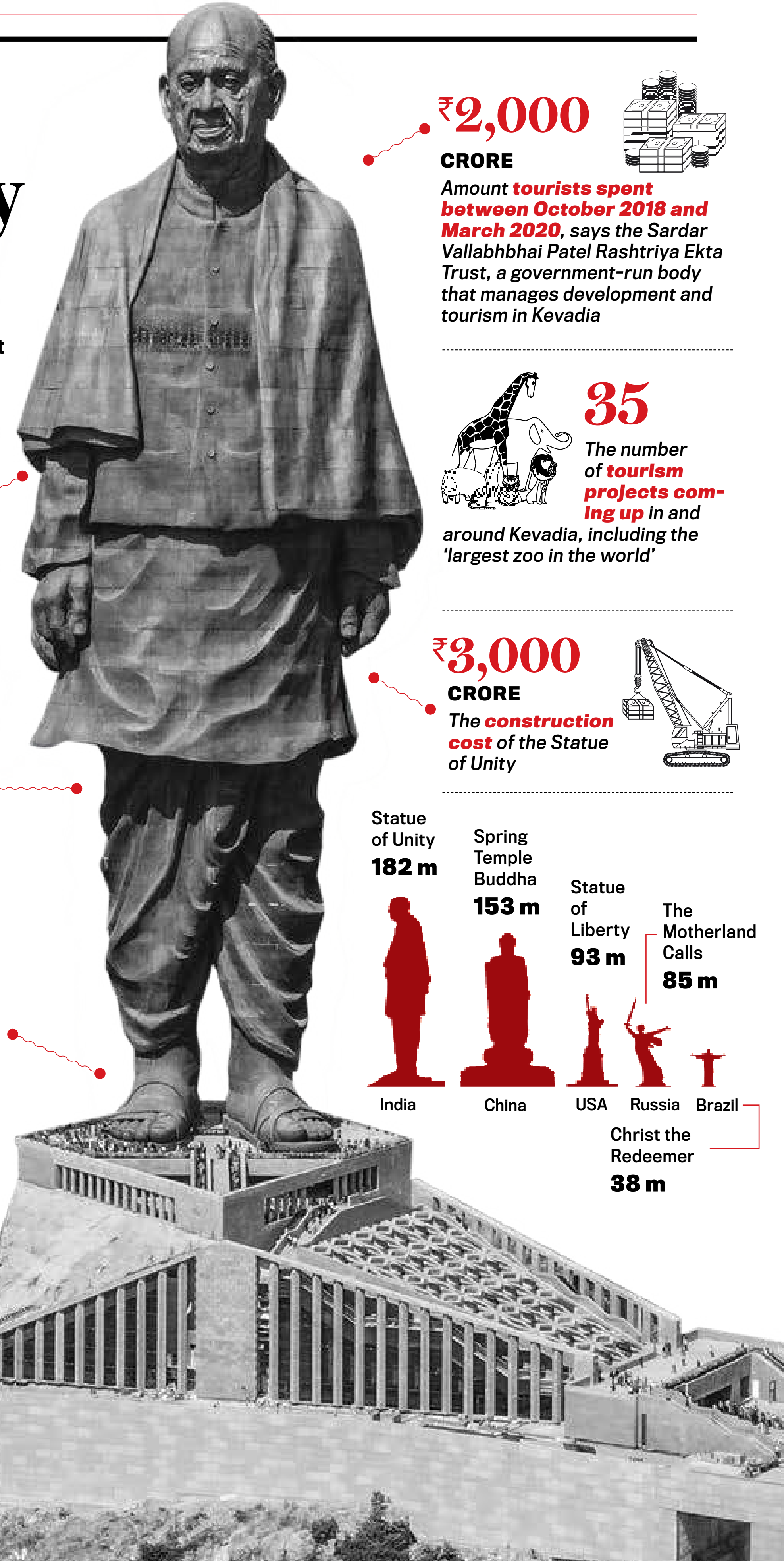
Tauseef, mastermind of the 2008 Ahmedabad serial blasts, was arrested from Gaya district

# Statue of Prosperity

**Completed in October 2018, the Statue of Unity is already—and despite the pandemic—bringing prosperity, the state government claims, to Gujarat's formerly backward Narmada district**

*Graphic by* NILANJAN DAS

*Text by* KIRAN D. TARE

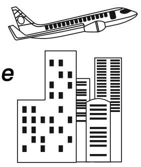


**5 MILLION**

*The number of **tourists who visited between October 2018 and March 2021**. Before the pandemic, the average weekend footfall was about 9,000*

**3,000**

*The number of **local families engaged in jobs**—as guides, drivers, support staff, etc.*



**40 KM**

*Radius of the area around the statue **being developed as a tourism and real estate hub**; land prices have reportedly gone up five times since its construction, to Rs 15,000 per sq. ft*

**8**

*The number of **trains from across India that travel to Kevadia**, India's first railway station with a green certification*

**₹2,000 CRORE**

*Amount **tourists spent between October 2018 and March 2020**, says the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Rashtriya Ekta Trust, a government-run body that manages development and tourism in Kevadia*

**35**

*The number of **tourism projects coming up** in and around Kevadia, including the 'largest zoo in the world'*

**₹3,000 CRORE**

*The **construction cost** of the Statue of Unity*

Statue of Unity **182 m** India

Spring Temple Buddha **153 m** China

Statue of Liberty **93 m** USA

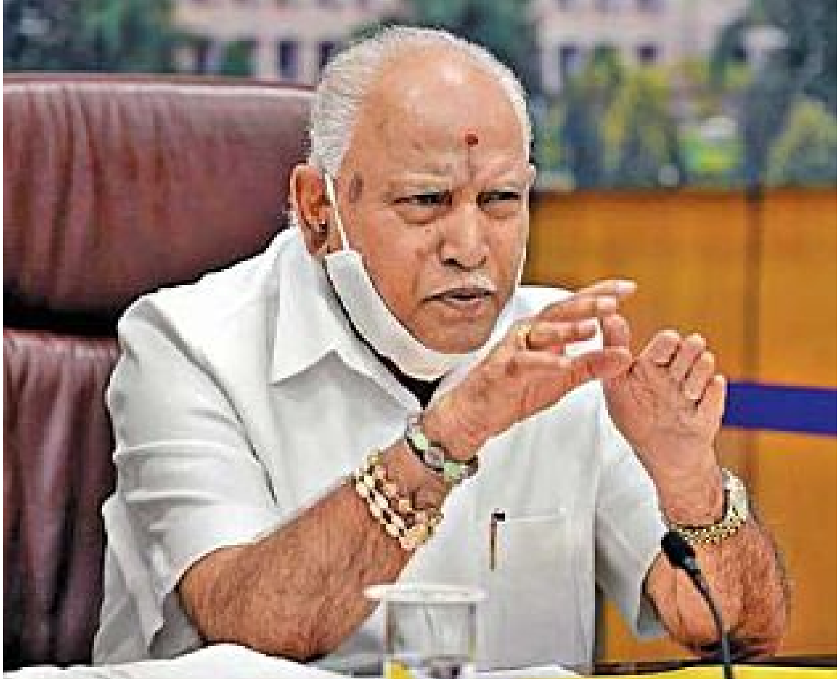
The Motherland Calls **85 m** Russia

Christ the Redeemer **38 m** Brazil

KARNATAKA

# YEDI, STEADY, GONE?

**By Aravind Gowda**



ANI

**EXIT ROUTE** BSY at a Covid lockdown meeting in Bengaluru, June 19

Two years after he engineered the BJP's return to power in Karnataka, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa (BSY), 78, may be on his way out. The mounting criticism of his style of functioning, his advancing age, allegations of son B.Y. Vijayendra's high-handedness in government have all contributed to his imminent downfall. However, the party's resolve to fight the next assembly poll (due in 2023) under a more youthful leadership has also played its part in BSY's fate. Yediyurappa will still be—or so the BJP will hope—a star campaigner for he is the undisputed leader of the Lingayats, the largest community in Karnataka and a trusted BJP vote bank.

There are strong indications that BSY will tender his resignation on or after July 26, the day he completes two years in office. The chief minister has convened a legislature party meeting on July 26 (there is no official order yet) and has invited all party legislators for dinner on Sunday night at his residence. A top BJP source says the "unexpected development" came after Yediyurappa's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party president J.P. Nadda last week in New Delhi. The term of the current Karnataka assembly ends in May 2023 and, apparently, BSY tried hard to retain his chair. "But it was made clear to him that he had to step down. He apparently chose an honourable exit on his own terms, most of which were agreed to," says the source.

Yediyurappa has been the rock on which the BJP has built its citadel in Karnataka. He served as CM on four different occasions, two of which did not last more than a week (he failed to muster the required majority). As the foremost leader of the Lingayats, it will not be easy to replace him. The community is yet to find a suitable alternative, all the more reason for the Lingayat community seers to be upset. The All India Veerashaiva Mahasabha too has opposed the decision.

Sources say the BJP central leadership has requested Yediyurappa to ensure a smooth handover. In return for his acquiescence, BSY has demanded a casting vote in the choice of candidates besides accommodating in the new government son Vijayendra (already a vice-president in the Karnataka BJP). "BSY, in turn, has been asked to lend complete support to his successor and ensure the Lingayat community stays with the BJP," says the source.

Political observers point out that BSY was under immense pressure over the past 7-8 months. "BJP and RSS leaders were unhappy with him for accommodating the opposition turncoats in the Cabinet. The bad press Yediyurappa got over his government's shoddy handling of the pandemic was the last straw," says political historian Prof. B. Manjunath.

> **A change at the top will have a cascading effect on the cabinet, dominated by MLAs who quit the Congress and JD(S) to help the BJP form a government**

There are several contenders for the CM's post with Union minister Prahlad Joshi (Brahmin) reportedly heading the list. Other names include assembly speaker V. Hegde Kageri (Brahmin), MLA Aravind Bellad (Lingayat youth leader), deputy CM C.N. Ashwath Narayan (from Karnataka's second-largest community, the Vokkaligas), mines and geology minister Murugesh Nirani (Lingayat), home minister Basavaraja Bommai (Lingayat) and BJP spokesperson C.T. Ravi (Vokkaliga). Food and civil supplies minister Umesh Katti (Lingayat) has also thrown his hat in the ring. Meanwhile, lending further credence to BSY's imminent ouster story is a voice clip gone viral that features an alleged conversation between state BJP chief Nalin K. Kateel and another party leader.

Any change at the top could have a cascading effect on the council of ministers, which is now dominated by legislators who quit the Congress and the JD(S) to help the BJP form a government in Karnataka. Ever since these turncoats were given plum portfolios, the BJP veterans have been seething. If Yediyurappa is replaced, and there is a cabinet reshuffle, it could cause a major flutter among the ministers. ■

MOHAMMED ALEEMUDDIN

ANDHRA PRADESH/ TELANGANA

# THE RIVER WATER WARS

**By Amarnath K. Menon**

On July 16, the bitter row between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana over sharing Krishna waters—tapping it for irrigation and hydro power—entered a new phase with the Union government's Jal Shakti ministry ordering that from mid-October the management and control of irrigation projects on the Krishna and Godavari rivers will vest with the respective river management boards and not the states. The notification has come not a day too soon. It has been seven years since the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, to carve out Telangana, but how the river waters will be managed and shared between the two Telugu states has remained unresolved.

Beginning October 14, 36 projects in the Krishna basin and 71 in the Godavari basin will come under the control of the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) and the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB), both set up in 2014 for the administration, regulation, maintenance and operation of the projects in the two river basins. Both the states have been asked to deposit Rs 200 crore each with the boards every year to cover operational and maintenance costs.

While Andhra Pradesh has welcomed the move, Telangana is not so pleased and might challenge it. Telangana chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) wanted the Centre to determine its fair share in the Krishna waters before bringing the projects under the control of the boards. Telangana has been drawing water for irrigation from the Srisailam Left Bank Canal project on the Krishna, which falls on the state's border with Andhra Pradesh. The latter, in turn, has been developing the Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme to draw water from the Krishna's right bank canal in spite of the KRMB asking both states to stop. Neither state secured the necessary permissions and approvals before launching their irrigation projects in the two river basins.

The Jal Shakti ministry has asked both to cease all work immediately and get the mandatory clearances for both completed and ongoing projects within six months. It has also cautioned the states against going ahead with any projects unless approved by the KRMB, GRMB, the Central Water Commission and other agencies.

While both states have about a dozen unapproved projects each, Andhra Pradesh has submitted the detailed project reports of five projects on the Krishna and two on the Godavari

**ROUGH WATERS**
A view of the Srisailam dam on the Krishna river

to the respective management boards. Telangana, on the other hand, has submitted none but has gone ahead and launched projects. The state is heavily dependent on loans for irrigation projects and has formed separate corporations to secure loans and negotiate loan agreements with a consortium of banks. Now, with the Centre declaring Telangana's projects as "unapproved", the banks have conveyed to the state that they cannot lend to projects with approvals pending. Power Finance Corporation and Rural Electrification Corporation, besides several commercial banks, are among the lenders for these irrigation projects.

Telangana is naturally peeved and believes the Centre's latest notification is yet another assault on the state's remit and federalism. This is despite the fact KRMB and GRMB were constituted by the Union government as early as in 2014 in consonance with the provisions of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act. From October onwards, any activity on the Krishna and Godavari basins—irrigation and hydropower generation—will come under the direct control of the boards and, by extension, the Government of India.

"This is a risky river management experiment considering that the two boards do not cover the entire river basins," says S.K. Joshi, a former chief secretary of Telangana who, for several years, was in charge of irrigation. According to Joshi, the management solution offered, at best, addresses the issue only partially and operations still depend on external conditions outside the ambit of the boards. Without determining the states' share of waters from the inter-state rivers, it is uncertain how the boards will allocate water to various projects without an overall allocation to each state.

The irony is that both KCR and his Andhra counterpart Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy were fighting over greater control, but instead of resolving issues, they both dug their heels in, which cost them dearly. "Their petty fight and their perception of the fair share of water got them into this situation. The Union government could not have asked for a better opportunity to push their bigger and broader agenda of bringing water into the Central list," says Biksham Gujja, an international expert on water policy.

**The Centre's intervention in the inter-state river water dispute is also being seen as a way of making water a Central subject**

Meanwhile, the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2021, that is likely to be approved by Parliament during the monsoon session, aims to delicense power supply. With that, the state governments will have no role whatsoever in electricity distribution in the coming years. And water may be next. Come October 14, in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, water will effectively become a Central subject. "The latest notifications will have far-reaching implications for the water sector, not just in these two states but in the entire country in a few years," cautions Gujja. "Both states need to come together and agree upon a mutually respectable framework and present it to the Supreme Court jointly to get out of this situation." For now, KCR and Jagan Reddy do not have a reconciliation formula and chances are slim that they will find one before the October 14 guillotine. ■

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**COMING IN STRONG**
Vasundhara Raje during the pilgrimage she undertook on her birthday, 2021

BJP IN RAJASTHAN

# A HOUSE DIVIDED

**By Rohit Parihar**

On July 17, the Rajasthan unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) sent a sharp message to former chief minister Vasundhara Raje and her loyalists. By expelling Rohitash Sharma, an ex-minister and three-time MLA, from the party for six years, the BJP high command was sending out the message that anyone who does not follow the party line will pay a heavy price. Sharma had been making pro-Raje statements in public, projecting her as the next chief ministerial candidate while also openly criticising BJP state chief Satish Poonia, none of which sat well with the party.

Sharma's expulsion is in line with the warning Arun Singh, BJP national general secretary and Rajasthan in-charge, recently gave to party leaders—to not make "arbitrary statements" in public. The current dispensation will hope that expelling Sharma will have a chilling effect and help rein in dissidence in the party's Rajasthan unit, but other party insiders predict it will have just the opposite effect and increase factionalism.

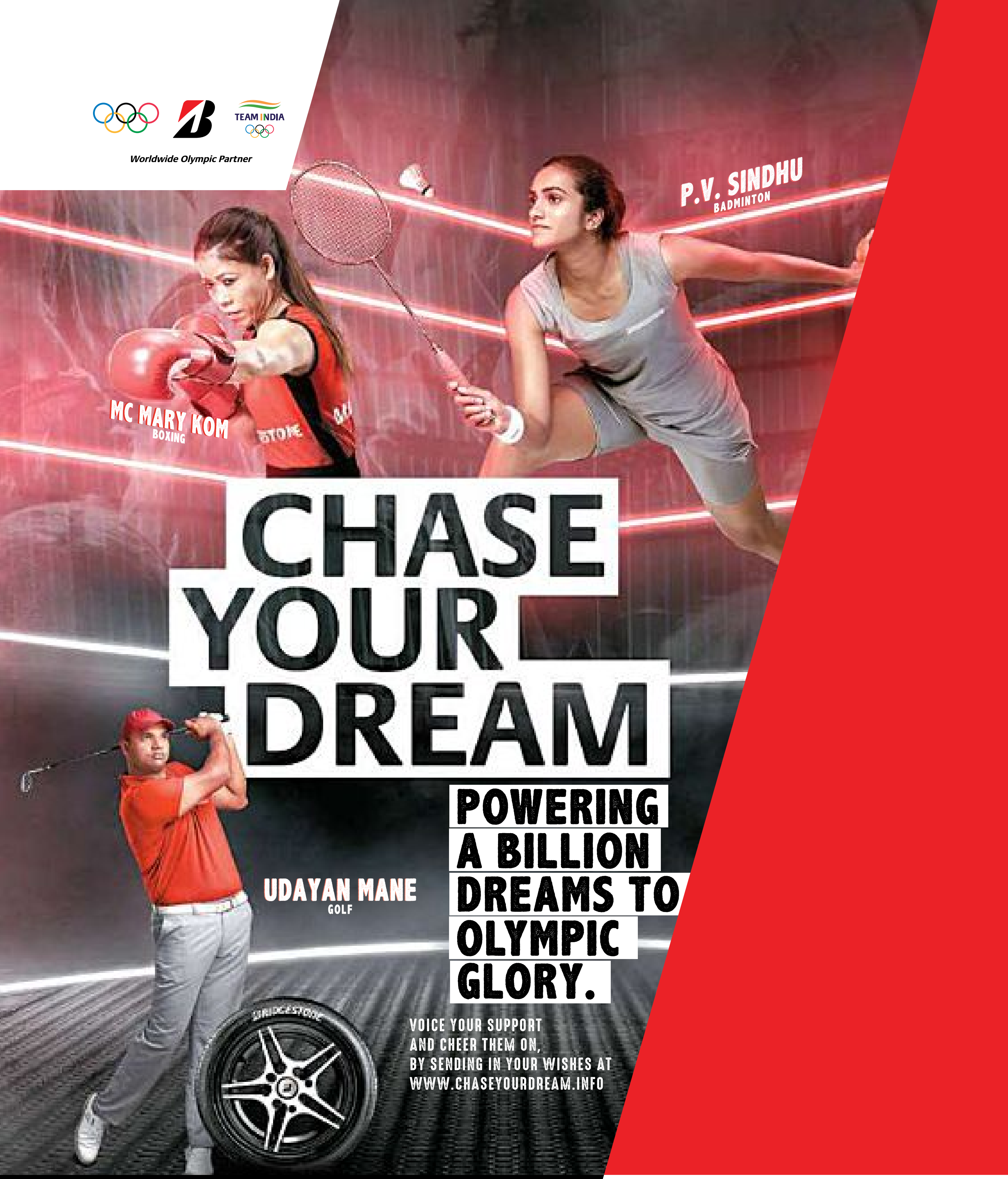
On July 18, the banners put up in Jodhpur to welcome national general secretary C.T. Ravi included photographs of Raje and other leaders, but not of Poonia. An image was later inserted following a directive from the state headquarters in Jaipur. During Poonia's visit to Alwar on July 15, Sharma's team had put up posters with images of the BJP national leaders and Raje, once again omitting Poonia.

Incensed at Sharma's open defiance, Poonia was waiting to strike. He saw his opportunity on July 17 when Sharma was drawn into a slightly indiscreet reference to Prime Minister Modi in a spat with BJP spokesperson Ramlal Sharma. Baited by Ramlal, who questioned Rohitash's commitment to the BJP's ideology, he shot back that he was a "disciple of Nawal Kishore Sharma, the late Congress leader who, as governor of Gujarat, had ignored the UPA's order to indict then chief minister Narendra Modi in the Godhra riots case". In this freely interpretable reference, Poonia saw a legitimate excuse to expel Sharma. One of Raje's aides, requesting anonymity, spoke of an incident in April when, in a viral audio clip, Jogeshwar Garg, the BJP's whip, was heard using Amit Shah's name to threaten a rebel BJP candidate to withdraw from contesting a bypoll. "If a good reference to Modi can lead to expulsion, why ignore casting Shah in a bad light?" he asks.

**The BJP will hope that expelling Raje loyalist Rohitash Sharma might quell dissidence in the state unit but it might do just the opposite**

The BJP has threatened stern action against anyone making false moves or public statements that might embarrass the party, but the fact is that there have been too many transgressions in the state lately. Take, for another example, Bhawani Singh Rajawat's public declaration that in Rajasthan 'BJP is Raje and Raje is BJP' or Pratap Singh Singhvi's public claim that it would be difficult to form a government in the state without Raje. This belief has many takers in the state unit and not just among Raje loyalists. Of course, Sharma, undeterred by his expulsion, said this even after he was shown the door. He said the state unit needed Raje in the same way that the party needed Modi to win at the national level. The lack of strong state leaders, Sharma says, is resulting in defeats in state elections. The ruling Congress party also did not project a chief minister and has ever since been torn between the two contenders to the top post—CM Ashok Gehlot and his bête noire Sachin Pilot. There might a lesson in it for the BJP.

Raje was not seen during the campaign for by-elections in April, but her birthday celebration in March was like a show of strength—even out of favour, Raje demonstrated she had the support of nearly half the party MLAs and a third of the MPs from the state. Vimal Katiyar, state president of the BJP's media cell, does not believe Raje is instigating rebels. "She has a medical emergency at home, so is not very active politically. Also, it is too early for a leader of her stature to engage in routine political activities," says Katiyar. It's certainly not too early for the BJP high command to decide on a course of action, with or without Raje, for the 2023 election. Coercing her loyalists to abandon her is not looking like a plan that might work. ■



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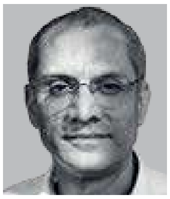

**COLIN GONSALVES**

GUEST COLUMN

# A Blot on Our Democracy

It is very unusual for three benches of the Supreme Court to express their views almost simultaneously on the sedition law—Sec. 124A of the Indian Penal Code.

For decades, farmers, artists, activists, trade unionists, journalists and others have been arrested for speaking out boldly against government. Peaceful anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) protesters were arrested in hundreds. Tribals in the Pathalgadi movement in Jharkhand had thousands of FIRs registered against them for telling the government they did not care for their Aadhaar cards and that tribal self-rule would be established in the state. Kishore Chandra Wangkhem, the journalist from Manipur, was arrested for using an expletive against the chief minister. Swearing is not even a crime, let alone an act of sedition. Freedom of speech includes the right to swear. Likewise, the JNU protesters were arrested for nothing other than criticism of the State.

During these decades, the judiciary saw these cases being discussed in the media, but it remained strangely quiet, watching young activists rot in jails and suffer torture even though it was clear that none of them had engaged in violence. This inaction had terrible consequences as it encouraged the police to carry on. Not a single judge dared to dismiss these cases for not having any ingredient of a crime. It was as if the judiciary had lost its institutional spine. That there were no judges willing to look at the FIRs and chargesheets and ask "where is the offence?" was a telling indictment of how low the judiciary had sunk.

> **When a politician wins a huge mandate at the polls and continues winning, judges seem to lose their determination to speak truth to power**

When a politician wins a huge mandate at the polls and continues his winning streak into the next term, judges seem to lose their determination to speak truth to power. Judges were told that the allegations of terrorism would be proved during the trial. In that case, the activists should have been arrested when the proof materialised. No person should spend a single day in jail on the assurance that proof justifying the incarceration will materialise some time in the future. In that case, judges are required under law to discharge the accused or release them on bail. That never happened and so acquittals became the rule under the terrorism statutes for lack of evidence.

A judgment of the Supreme Court that requires particular attention is the one delivered in the *National Investigation Agency vs Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali* case, 2019. The judges held that prosecution evidence that would not be legally admissible during trial (such as hearsay evidence) could nevertheless form the basis for denial of bail. This is an incredible proposition since criminal law mandates that a person can be incarcerated only on the basis of evidence admissible in law. The civil rights activists arrested in the Bhima-Koregaon case are suffering illegal incarceration on account of this terrible judgment.

Two earlier judgments of the Supreme Court should have given the judges courage to prevent the meaningless arrests on sedition charges. The first was *Bilal Ahmed Kaloo vs State*, where the accused exhorted his fellow Kashmiris to take up arms against the State for *azadi*. He was arrested and convicted under the sedition law. However, when the matter reached the Supreme Court, the judges asked if he had engaged in or incited an act of violence, and on receiving an answer in the negative, promptly acquitted the accused. A similar case from Punjab, *Balwant Singh vs State*, also resulted in the acquittal of the accused who had shouted pro-Khalistani slogans. The only charge against him was that he had raised these slogans. The principle, then, is this: strong words for the overthrow of the State are not enough to invite the charge of sedition; it requires violent action threatening the government in power. The use of hateful words against a government is not even a crime, and is completely protected by Article 19(i)(a) of the Constitution—Freedom of Speech and Expression.

The judiciary has a lot of catching up to do. Judges must now act decisively. They must declare Sec. 124A unconstitutional, and by doing so, erase from the statute book one of the darkest blots on our democracy. ■

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**Colin Gonsalves** *is a designated senior advocate of the Supreme Court of India and founder of the Human Rights Law Network*

*Illustration by* SIDDHANT JUMDE

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SOUNAVA RAY SARKAR

### INDIA'S POPULATION POLICY

# MYTHS AND REALITY

## WHILE REFORMS ARE MUCH NEEDED TO CONTROL POPULATION GROWTH, THE BIG QUESTIONS ARE: DO COERCIVE BIRTH CONTROL MEASURES WORK? IS THE GROWING NUMBER OF MUSLIMS A THREAT TO HINDUS? IS INDIA LOSING ITS DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND? HERE IS A REALITY CHECK

By Kaushik Deka, Sonali Acharjee and Shwweta Punj

**When Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath** chose the occasion of World Population Day on July 11 to announce a new state population policy, there normally should have been no quarrel about it. After all, the state is India's most populous, harbouring nearly 200 million people (as per Census 2011) or 17 per cent of India's population. If it were to become a nation, Uttar Pradesh would have the fifth largest population in the world.

So instead of welcoming a policy to control the state's burgeoning population, why was there such a storm over Yogi's announcement? Sure, some of the birth control measures are coercive. While pushing for a two-child policy per couple, the state plans to introduce both incentives and disincentives to ensure its implementation. In terms of incentives, government servants adopting the two-child norms would get two additional increments during their service apart from being eligible for maternity or paternity leave for 12 months with full salary and a three per cent increase in the employment contribution fund. As regards disincentives for those found exceeding the norm, they would be debarred from contesting local bodies polls, will not be eligible for government jobs, will be denied a promotion if in service and will not receive any form of subsidies.

The bill is yet to be passed, and it is still not clear what final form it would take. But many of the measures are no different from what 12 other states have enacted in the past. These states have barred people with three children from contesting civic polls apart from other disincentives. In Maharashtra, those who have more than two children are not only debarred from government jobs but are also denied benefits of government welfare schemes.

What seems to have caused the furore in UP is the timing of the announcement, coming as it did with state elections just eight months away. A controversial assertion by the chief minister while releasing the draft policy—that it will not only help reduce fertility levels in the state, but also ensure "a population balance among various communities"—did not help matters. The government staunchly denied targeting of any particular community and, to be fair to Adityanath, the bill does not seem to differentiate between religious communities or caste denominations. But opposition parties immediately saw it as a dog-whistle, raising the bogey of Muslims one day outnumbering Hindus to polarise the vote before the assembly election.

Population control has always been a hot potato after the infamous forced sterilisation campaign of the Emergency; it was among the main reasons the Congress government led by Indira Gandhi lost the 1977 general election. The brouhaha over UP's announcement raised fresh questions about India's population growth and its policies. Among them: is the Muslim population growing more rapidly than the Hindus, and could it pose a threat to the latter? Is India still facing a population explosion and will coercive methods like those proposed by UP be effective in controlling the numbers? Are the concerns that India will lose its demographic advantage—in terms of a young population for cheap labour—if it purses a rigorous population control policy valid? Each of these questions have many myths associated with them that need a reality check.

> **"Significantly, the decline in decadal growth rates has been sharper among Muslims than among Hindus over the past three decades"**
>
> –POONAM MUTTREJA
> *Executive director, Population Foundation of India*

### Is the Muslim population growing too rapidly and will it pose a threat to the majority community in future?

Though Yogi Adityanath did not name any specific community or religious group, his critics were in no doubt who the target was. "This policy is pure political fingerprinting," says Congress Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor. "They [The BJP] are trying to demonise a particular community. We have seen this in Assam where they are concerned about certain migrant Bengali Muslims. In UP, we know what Adityanath and his henchmen are doing." UP's population bill received flak even from right-wing Hindu groups. The VHP (Vishva Hindu Parishad) has warned the state government that any population control measure should keep in mind the fact that Hindu dominance must remain intact in the country.

**54%**

**of the candidates disqualified from contesting bypolls in 21 districts in five states following the two-child norm were illiterate, shows a 2009 report supported by the panchayati raj ministry**

So what is the reality? The facts speak for themselves. At over 38 million people, according to the 2011 census, UP is home to the highest number of Muslims in the country. But the community still accounts for less than 20 per cent of the state's population. Right-wing Hindu groups have often highlighted the difference between the growth rates of Hindus and Muslims in the state. Between 2001 and 2011, Hindus grew at 2 percent annually while Muslims grew at 2.5 per cent. But the Population Foundation of India (PFI) points out that while the Hindu growth rate declined by 5.6 percentage points during the last two census (2001 and 2011), for Muslims, the decline was even faster, 6.1 percentage points for the same period.

What about national figures? Encouragingly, there has been a significant drop in birth rates among all religious groups, including Muslims. Population Foundation of India's executive director Poonam Muttreja says, "Significantly, the decline in decadal growth rates has been sharper among Muslims than among Hindus over the past three decades." PFI calculations show that the decline in decadal growth rates during 2001 and 2011 for Muslims was 4.7 per cent in comparison to Hindus which was 3.1 per cent in the same period. The decline in population growth rates for Jains (20.5 per cent), Buddhists (16.7 per cent), Sikhs (8.5 per cent) and Christians (7 per cent) was even more steep during the same period.

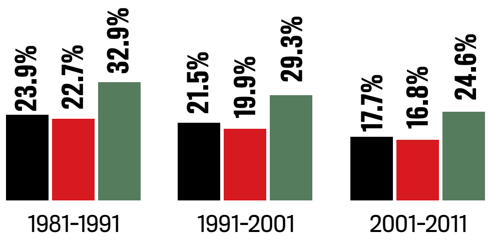
Sceptics dispute these findings and point out that nationally, between 2001 and 2011, the Muslim population growth of 2.46 per cent annually was

*Graphics by* TANMOY CHAKRABORTY

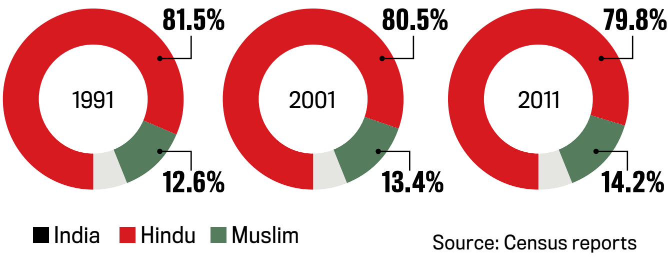
# THE RELIGIOUS DIVIDE

While population growth rates show a downward trend among both Hindus and Muslims, the Muslim population has consistently grown faster than the national average in some states

## POPULATION GROWTH RATE



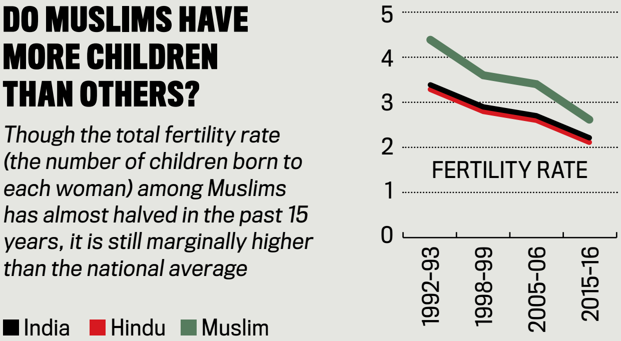
## SHARE OF POPULATION



Source: Census reports

## DO MUSLIMS HAVE MORE CHILDREN THAN OTHERS?

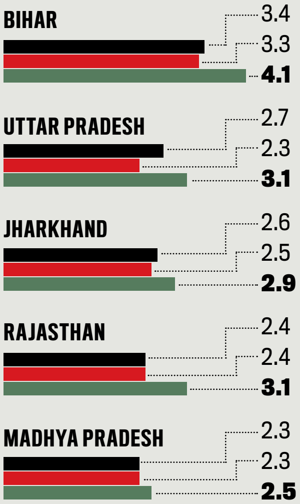
*Though the total fertility rate (the number of children born to each woman) among Muslims has almost halved in the past 15 years, it is still marginally higher than the national average*



Source: National Family Health Surveys

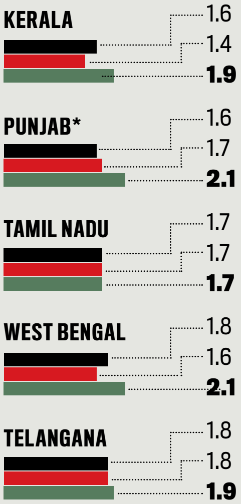
## TOP FIVE STATES WITH THE HIGHEST FERTILITY RATES

*The fertility rates of both Hindus and Muslims are higher than 2.1 (the rate at which the population stabilises) in these five states, which are also known for poor human development indices*



## TOP FIVE STATES WITH THE LOWEST FERTILITY RATES

*The fertility rates of both Hindus and Muslims in these states are at or below the replacement rate of 2.1. The Muslim fertility rate in these states is below the national avg. for the community: 2.6*



*Note: In Punjab, Sikhs are considered the dominant population
Source: National Family Health Surveys 2015-16

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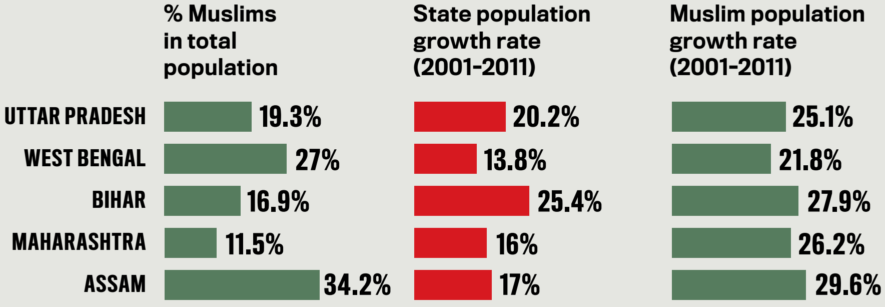
## TOP FIVE STATES WITH THE LARGEST MUSLIM POPULATIONS

*These five states account for 60 per cent of India's Muslim population. The decadal growth rate of Muslims has declined in four of these states, but still remains significantly higher than the state's average population growth*



Source: Census reports

much faster than the figure for Hindus of 1.67 per cent, which was lower than the national average of 1.77 per cent). The counter argument is that it has not made a significant shift in population share. The share of Hindus in the total population came down marginally from 80.5 per cent in 2001 to 79.8 per cent in 2011—a decline of 0.7 per cent. While the share of the Muslim population, which in 2001 was 13.4 per cent, went up marginally in 2011 to 14.2 per cent, a 0.8 per cent increase. In terms of absolute numbers, PFI figures reveal that the Hindu population increased by 139 million during 2001-11, while the Muslim population increased by 34 million. A far cry from the visions of Muslim demographic domination being peddled to mobilise Hindus.

Such rhetoric also ignores cultural and geographical specificities, and the level of development, which are more important determinants than religion of how many children a woman will have. The state-wise data of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2015-16 shows that the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of different religious communities have greater variation between states than between communities. For instance, though the all-India TFR is 2.6 for Muslims compared to 2.1 for Hindus, the rate varies widely from 1.7 in Tamil Nadu to 4.1 in Bihar. In Chhattisgarh, the Muslim TFR of 2.1 was lower than the 2.2 TFR for Hindus, while Muslims in Odisha had the lowest TFR among the three sizeable religious groups in the state—Hindus, Christians and Muslims.

More importantly, the TFR among Muslims has been dropping at a faster rate, narrowing the gap with Hindus. In 1992-93, the National Family Health Survey said that TFR for Hindus and Muslims was 3.3 and 4.4 respectively. In 2015-16, the corresponding numbers were 2.1 and 2.6. “Fertility differentials exist by residence, region, education, wealth index and socioreligious groups,” says Dr Sayeed Unisa, head of the department of mathematical demography & statistics, International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai. “Both the Hindu and Muslim communities have large sections of the socioeconomically most backward population with high fertility.”

Other experts, however, caution that the fertility gap between Muslims and Hindus in big states such as UP, Bihar and Assam remains a point of concern despite the decline. In Assam, for instance, 2011 saw the sharpest rise in Muslim population among all states as their share of the total population jumped by 3.3 percentage points—from 30.9 per cent to 34.2 per cent. Since 1991, the annual growth rate of Muslims in the state has been around 3 per cent while the Hindu population growth rate —just over 1 per cent—has seen a marginal dip. Though it has dropped from a high of 3.6 in 2005-06, at 2.4 children per woman, the fertility rate among Muslims in Assam is still the second-highest among all states in India in 2019-20. Overall, while the fears of Muslims overtaking the Hindu population are far-fetched, in some states there needs to be greater awareness created to ensure a uniform decline in population growth.

पंजीकरण
REGISTRATION

**QUEUE PLEASE**
An overcrowded OPD at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in Lucknow

**Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, an ally of the ruling BJP, rejects coercive norms to enforce population control, and says women’s empowerment is a better plan**

## Is India still in the midst of a ‘population explosion’?

The votaries of population control got a big boost immediately after Narendra Modi returned to power in May 2019. During his Independence Day speech that year, the prime minister

MANEESH AGNIHOTRI

raised concerns over India's "population explosion", underlining the need for greater discussion and awareness on the issue. What is the truth? According to 2019 Revision of World Population Prospects by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, at its current growth rate, India's population will surpass China's by 2027 to become the world's most populous country.

"In 70 years, we have upped our population four times without adding a square centimetre of new territory," says Manish Tewari, Congress MP. "China is just a little ahead of India but occupies 6.3 per cent of the world's land mass, twice that of India. In other words, India should have at best stabilised its population at 700 million and kept it at that." India occupies 2.4 per cent of the world's land mass but supports over 18 per cent of its population. This means there is only 0.5 acres for every Indian compared to the global average of 5 acres per person.

While most experts agree that a burgeoning population places pressure on India's resources, particularly in urban areas, they assert that the country is heading towards population stabilisation, both with and without the help of government-initiated population control measures. In 1952, India became the first country in the world to have a National Programme for Family Planning, which was last amended in 2000. The policy largely revolves around promoting awareness about family planning and providing contraceptive support to couples. And despite multiple gaps in implementation, most experts claim that it has achieved the desired TFR of 2.1. The UN's population division terms this as replacement-level fertility, which keeps the population stable.

However, when it comes to states there is huge disparity in terms of population growth and TFR. Six states—UP, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh—account for roughly 40 per cent of India's population, and have TFR above 2.1. According to a report by the Technical Group on Population Projections released in 2020, nearly one-fifth of the country's total population increase between 2011 and 2036 may occur in UP. The other five states too require focussed attention to slow down their population growth.

## Do Population Disincentives Work?

The Modi government is clear that there is no push to impose a two-child norm. Ashwini Kumar Choubey, the Union MoS for health and family welfare, said in the Lok Sabha on July 19, "There is no such proposal under consideration at present. As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) IV data for 2015-16, the TFR has declined to 2.2 from the earlier 2.7 in NFHS-III (2005-06). Twenty-eight out of 36 states/ UTs have already achieved the replacement level fertility of 2.1 or less. Additionally, India is a signatory to the declaration at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994, and in Nairobi in 2019, which advocates the honouring of the reproductive rights of couples to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children."

**75%**

**of married men in India use no contraception; about 53% of unmarried men use no contraception**

**48%**

**of married women in India use contraception, but among adolescent married women (aged 15-19), the figure is about 15%**

**77%**

**of women who use contraceptives go for sterilisation; only 0.63% of men who use contraceptives do the same**

**8%**

**of married women (aged 15-49) take independent decisions about using contraceptives**

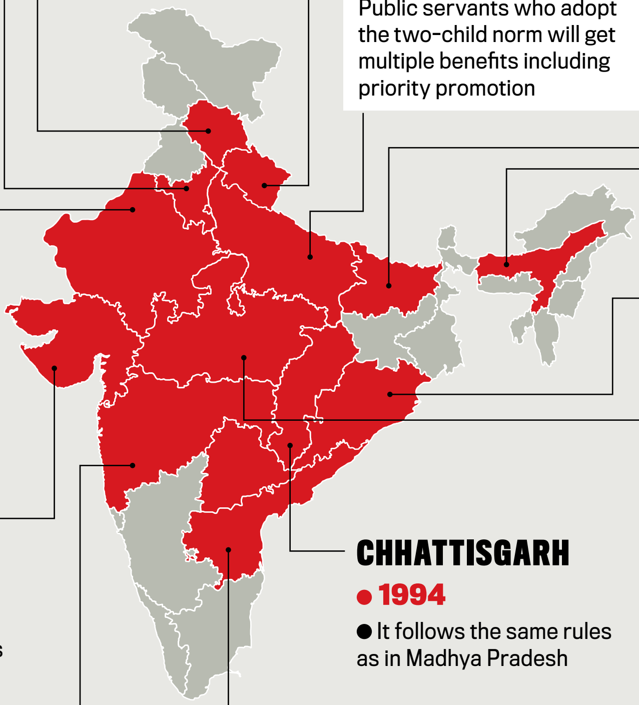
**1.71**

**Fertility rate for women with over 12 years of education; for uneducated women, it is 3.06**

Source: National Family Health Survey 4

# STATES WITH A TWO-CHILD NORM

A dozen states have introduced laws that offer it as an incentive for population control



### HIMACHAL PRADESH

● **2000**

● People with more than two-children were barred from contesting panchayat polls; revoked in 2005

### HARYANA

● **1994**

● No person with more than two children could contest the panchayat/ zila parishad poll; revoked in 2006

### RAJASTHAN

● **1994**

● Anyone with more than two children, cannot contest panchayat election; Compulsory retirement for government employees on the birth of their third child–this provision revoked in 2018

### GUJARAT

● **2005**

● Disqualifies anyone with more than two children from contesting local body elections

### MAHARASHTRA

● **2003**

● Disqualifies people with more than two children from contesting local body elections, holding a job in the state government and accessing PDS benefits

### UTTARAKHAND

● **2002**

● Bars people with more than two children from contesting local body elections; applicable after July 2019

### UTTAR PRADESH

● **2021 (draft stage)**

● Anyone with more than two children will be debarred from contesting local bodies polls, applying for government jobs, getting promotions and receiving any kind of subsidy. Public servants who adopt the two-child norm will get multiple benefits including priority promotion

### BIHAR

● **2007**

● Any individual having more than two children cannot contest urban local body elections

### ASSAM

● **2017**

● People with more than two children cannot contest civic polls, hold govt. jobs and avail benefits of govt. schemes; not yet implemented

### ODISHA

● **1993**

● Bars individuals with more than two children from contesting civic body elections

### CHHATTISGARH

● **1994**

● It follows the same rules as in Madhya Pradesh

### ANDHRA PRADESH

*(applicable in Telangana too)*

● **1994**

● If a person had more than two children after May 30, 1994, he or she will be disqualified from contesting local body elections

### MADHYA PRADESH

● **2000**

● If the third child was born on or after January 26, 2001, one becomes ineligible for government jobs. In 2005, the two-child norm for candidates of local body elections was revoked

● Year of legislation

● What it proposed

Ironically, this statement came on cut-off date the UP government had fixed for suggestions on the proposed Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilisation and Welfare) Bill, 2021. Since the 1990s, 12 other states—Odisha (1993), Haryana (1994), Andhra Pradesh (1994), Rajasthan (1994), Himachal Pradesh (2000), Madhya Pradesh (2000), Chhattisgarh (2000), Uttarakhand (2002), Maharashtra (2003), Gujarat (2005), Bihar (2007) and Assam (2017)—have experimented with some form of a two-child policy. Four of these states—Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, MP and Haryana—subsequently revoked the norms.

Experts have always questioned the efficacy of a punitive approach to population control. According to PFI, a strict limit on the number of children like the two-child norm will

**In Tamil Nadu, reduction in infant mortality rate (IMR) by improving maternal nutrition helped lower TFR from 2.2 in 1999 to 1.7 in 2016**

Photos: ANI

आकर्षित करने हेतु
यूनाइ
Move the country, bring the Uniform Civil Code law
Increasing population is the root of country's problems
जनसंख्या

**LESS IS MORE** (Clockwise from top) United Hindu Front workers protest asking for a population control policy; Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma; Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath releases the 2021-30 State Population Policy

unleash a rapid increase in sex-specific abortions and divorce. In her 2006 book, *The Law of Two Child Norm in Panchayats*, Nirmala Buch, a former chief secretary of MP, documented how the two-child law in various states led to a rise in sex-selective and unsafe abortions. Men divorced their wives to run for local body polls and families gave up children for adoption to avoid disqualification.

The situation gets compounded when such norms are introduced without factoring in socioeconomic indicators. A 2009 report supported by the panchayati raj ministry showed that in 21 districts in five states where the two-child norm was operational, 54 per cent of the disqualified candidates were either illiterate or had only primary education, 78 per cent belonged to SCs/ STs/ OBCs and nearly half of them had an annual income of less than Rs 20,000.

China followed a strict one-child policy for more than 30 years. According to a 2016 study by the Institute for Population and Development Studies, Xi'an Jiaotong University, the policy resulted in undesirable consequences like sex-selective abortions, depressed fertility levels, irreversible population ageing, labour shortages and economic slowdown. Realising their folly, China abandoned the one-child norm in 2016 and is now officially encouraging a three-child norm.

### What then is the best birth control method?

The real issue is that while India has propagated birth control since 1952 as a national policy, the burden for family planning has largely been on women. Men in India hardly opt for contraceptives such as sterilisation or even condoms because of the cultural perception that birth control is not a "masculine" thing. Only 25 per cent of married men use contraceptives as against 48 per cent of married women. Worse, the NFHS-4 data reveals that not even half of the women who avail family planning counselling are informed of other options beyond irreversible methods such as sterilisation.

"Even if the ministry of health and family welfare (MoHFW) provides six different alternatives, most women aren't informed of them," says Debanjana Choudhuri, Asia advocacy and partnerships advisor, Foundation for Reproductive Health Services in India (FRHSI). So, of all the women who opt for birth control, a whopping 77 per cent go for sterilisation. The fear now is that the incentives for two children will drive more families to force their women to go for sterilisation, a procedure that can even be harmful to maternal health if done immediately after birthing. Chaudhari points out that sterilisation is a popular choice for women because it involves just a single visit to the clinic. For an Intra Uterine Device (IUD), one must return in five years for a check-up.

Data from across the world shows that countries with successful family planning programmes have very low use of sterilisation. According to Argentina Matavel Piccin, the India Representative of the UN Population Fund, the earlier focus on irreversible methods such as sterilisation to reduce fertility rate has been a hard habit to break among healthcare providers. Reversible methods are more convenient to use and allow birth spacing between two children. Irreversible methods are for when a couple is done childbearing entirely.

Examples from countries such as Thailand and Bhutan show that providing more choices in birth control to women can help increase contraceptive prevalence rate significantly. Bhutan is an excellent example—the empowerment of women helped lower their TFR from 6.6 in the 1960s to 1.98 in 2018. "The lesson here is that when couples are offered a wide range of choices, they are more likely to use a contraceptive. Further, when couples and individuals have greater access to contraceptives early in their reproductive careers, there is a delay in the age of first childbirth and hence, a wider generation gap," says Piccin.

Infant mortality rate (IMR) also plays a key role in determining the inclination towards family planning. "Often more children are conceived because the chances of survival are low," says Choudhuri. In Tamil Nadu, reduction in IMR by improving maternal nutrition helped lower TFR from 2.2 in 1999 to 1.7 in 2016. The latest NFHS-5 shows a reduction in IMR and under-5 mortality rate in nearly all the 17 states surveyed. "It is also extremely important to space out births, mostly for the health of the mother. However, this is often not done; family planning counselling is crucial for couples planning a second child," says Dr Manisha Singh, senior consultant, gynaecology and reproductive medicine at Fortis hospital in Bannerghatta, Bengaluru.

In 2019, at the International Conference on Population and Development, India pledged to end the unmet need for contraception by 2030, recognising the importance of women-centric family planning policies to tackle population growth. At the same time, it's equally important to sensitise men towards birth control. Condom usage in India remains extremely low at 5.6 per cent of the population. "To reach our gender and health goals, we must focus on men and boys and encourage an open and inclusive dialogue on sexual and reproductive health," says Dr S.K. Sikdar, advisor, maternal health and family planning, MOHFW.

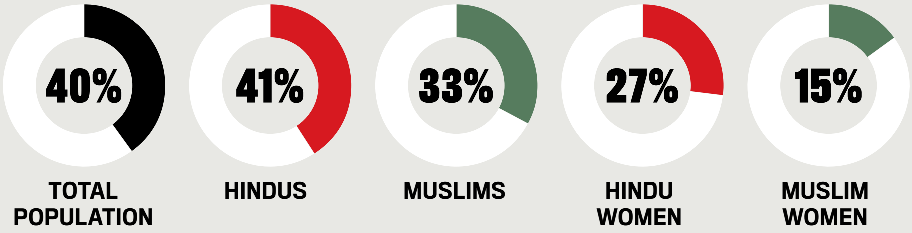
> **"Global experiences illustrate that education, particularly of females, is the most important factor contributing to fertility reduction"**
>
> —PROF. T.V. SEKHER
>
> *Head of Dept, population policies & programmes, International Institute of Population Sciences, Mumbai*

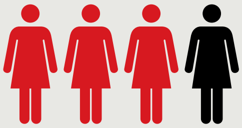
Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar, an ally of the ruling BJP, has rejected coercive norms for enforcing population control, saying that promoting education among girls is a better plan. In India, the TFR for women who have more than 12 years of education is 1.7, compared to 3.1 for the illiterate. "Experiences from all over the world convincingly illustrate that education, particularly of females, is the most important factor contributing to fertility reduction," says Prof. T.V. Sekher of the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, and former Fulbright-Nehru Senior Fellow at Cor-

# LEFT BEHIND

India's labour participation rate is among the lowest in the world—with women and Muslims reporting very low levels of participation

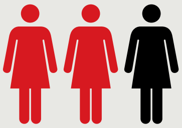
## WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION RATE





**3 of 4 women**

over the age of 15 in India are neither working nor seeking work



**2 of 3 women**

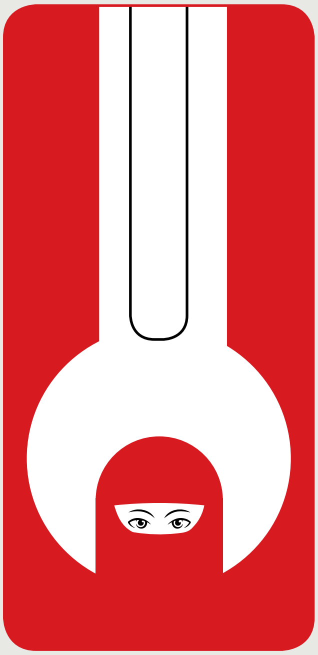
in the prime working age (30-50) are not in the workforce

**16%**

The projected share of the elderly population (over 60 years) in India in 2041, up from 8 per cent in 2011

**5.5%**

The reduction in per capita GDP growth for a 10% increase in the share of population over 60



Source: NSSO Labour Force Survey 2017-18; National Bureau of Economic Research; Economic Survey 2018-19

**DERAILED?** Candidates for a railway recruitment exam spend the night at the Allahabad railway station

AP

nell University. “Through education we empower women, and this ensures they have the ability and autonomy to take the right decisions about when and how many children they would like to have.”

That's the consensus among experts—instead of punitive exclusionary measures, focus more on inclusive measures such as spread of education and awareness about family planning, making contraception easy and available, incentivising later marriages and childbirths, and promoting participation of the women labour force. Development remains the best contraceptive method. Short-term electoral gains are the last thing that should dictate any approach to population control.

### Is India in danger of losing its demographic dividend?

With nearly two-third of India's population between 15 and 59—as revealed by the Sample Registration System's 2018 report—India boasts of a demographic dividend of a young population even as major economies of the world struggle with a declining working age population. India has more working age people than any other country in the world. Its share of the working-age population is set to almost peak by the end of this decade—from 55.8 per cent now to 58.8 per cent in 2031.

The 2018-19 Economic Survey says the working-age population will grow by 9.7 million per year during 2021-31 and 4.2 million per year in 2031-41. “A young demographic leads to a virtuous cycle. More people in the workforce means more people earning, investing, paying taxes, creating demand. Typically, with a young population, consumption spending is higher. It helps the fiscal situation. That is on the presumption that the macro economy is growing,” explains Ajit Ranade, president and chief economist at Aditya Birla Group.

But there are dangers. As more Indians get ready to join workforce, India's labour participation rate still hovers below 50 per cent, in sharp contrast to developed countries. For instance, the labour participation rate in the US is 61.6 per cent, in the UK it's 78.7 and in the EU 56.5. Most economists aver that women's participation in the labour force plays a crucial role in reducing their fertility rates. The share of women's participation at work in India was an abysmal 36 per cent in 2021, compared to 64 per cent by men. Worse, instead of increasing in the past decade, it has shown signs of declining.

Even as India struggles to explore the true potential of its demographic dividend, there is a fear that the current focus on population control may dent the advantage in the future. The 2018-19 Economic Survey also warns that India's population at the national level and in several states will begin ageing significantly in the next eight years. The share of the young population (0-19 years) could drop to 25 per cent in 2041, from 41 per cent in 2011. In the same period, the share of the elderly population (over 60 years) will double from 8 to 16 per cent. A 2016 research paper by the National Bureau of Economic Research showed that a 10 per cent increase in the share of the 60-plus population reduces the per capita GDP growth rate by 5.5 per cent.

While the size of the working-age population will decline in 11 out of 22 major states, it will continue to rise in states such as Bihar, UP, MP and Rajasthan. These states could meet the labour deficit in states with an ageing population. However, the challenge will be to convert this 'young population' to employable manpower. "In Bihar, around one-third of men, and in UP, one-fifth, are illiterate. About 50 per cent men have less than secondary level education in MP and Rajasthan. Again, in UP and Bihar, two-fifths of the males do not even have secondary level education. The situation is worse for women, with around half the population illiterate in Bihar, Rajasthan and UP. At least secondary level education is required for skill development and to enter formal employment. With such depressing levels of education in the major states, we cannot gain from the demographic dividend," says Professor Unisa.

> **"With a higher proportion of working age population, what kind of work becomes crucial. Do things that will raise productivity, that will improve quality of jobs of people. You are employing such a vast population in tiny little farms"**
>
> **–ARVIND PANAGARIYA**
> *Former vice-chairman, Niti Aayog, and professor of economics, Columbia University*

> **"At least secondary level education is required for skill development and to enter formal jobs. With such depressing levels of education in the major states, we cannot gain from the demographic dividend"**
>
> **–DR SAYEED UNISA,**
> *Head of Dept, mathematical demography & statistics, International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai*

Arvind Panagariya, former vice-chairman, Niti Aayog, and professor of economics at Columbia University, emphasises the need to frame economic policies that boost productivity and eventually quality of jobs. That's where India's record has been dismal, in nurturing human capital. Panagariya explains: "With a higher proportion of working age population, what kind of work becomes crucial. I take the view that for productivity, economic policies trump over anything. Do things that will raise productivity, that will improve quality of jobs of people. You are employing such a vast population in tiny little farms."

The other issue is that India spends only about 3.1 per cent of its GDP on education, while health gets about 1.5 per cent of its total spend. The US spends nearly 17 per cent of its GDP on public health and 6 per cent on education. "India remains deficient in allocations for health and education. When the population begins to age, health requirements will become more," says D.K. Srivastava, policy advisor, EY India.

In the post-pandemic world, as the two largest economies—the US and China—stand locked toe to toe, India is in a unique position to capture the booming demand and export opportunity. "We can exploit the export opportunity. Our biggest driver is people. We should focus on labour intensive exports—textiles, leather, agro processing, medical tourism," suggests Ranade. With China's dependency ratio rising and labour becoming costlier, the time is now ripe for India to capitalise on its demography. More than coercive measures of birth control, what is needed is to educate people, keep them healthy and build an enabling environment for businesses to expand and hire. The key is striking the right balance between population control and keeping the pace of economic growth. ■

देश का नं. 1
हिंदी न्यूज़ ऐप

जुड़े रहिए हर खबर से,
कहीं भी, कभी भी

अभी डाउनलोड करें

aajtak.in/app

उपलब्ध है

12:30
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नमस्कार!
Missed Daily Capsule?
Tap to see it again.

● बड़ी ख़बरें

जम्मू-कश्मीर

**जम्मू-कश्मीर के शोपियां में बड़ा आतंकी हमला, 4 पुलिसकर्मी शहीद**

पिछले कुछ दिनों में घाटी में आतंकी हमलों में तेजी आई है. एक ओर आतंकी सेना को निशाना बना रहे हैं, तो वहीं सेना भी ऑपरेशन चला

# THE PEGASUS PLOT THICKENS

## THE GOVERNMENT STAUNCHLY DENIES ALLEGATIONS OF HAVING USED FOREIGN MALWARE TO SNOOP ON PRIVATE INDIAN CITIZENS. BUT THE CONTROVERSY HAS RAISED MAJOR CONCERNS ABOUT VIOLATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY AND EFFECTIVE CHECKS TO PREVENT MISUSE OF STATE POWER

**By Sandeep Unnithan** / *Illustration by* **NILANJAN DAS**

**IS THE INDIAN STATE RUNNING** a mass surveillance programme, keeping tabs on journalists, human rights activists and opposition leaders along with its own ministers and key officials? This is the charge made by French news organisation Forbidden Stories and Amnesty International on July 18 in their serialised revelation of spying activities carried out by countries across the globe.

The ‘Pegasus Project’, a global consortium of 17 media organisations including Indian news website www.thewire.in, suggests India is among the 45 countries using a malware developed by the Israel-based NSO group. The purported snoop list includes 50,000 people and has phone numbers linked to at least 14 heads of state, like French president Emmanuel Macron and Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan.

According to *The Washington Post*, more than 1,000 phone numbers from India appeared on the list. The first list of names had 40 Indian journalists (including this writer) covering politics, foreign affairs and defence. A second list had the names of Opposition leaders like Rahul Gandhi, election strategist Prashant Kishor, newly-appointed IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and top virologist Gagandeep Kang. Vaishnaw has denied the allegations, calling them “an attempt to malign Indian democracy and its well-established institutions”. In a statement in the Lok Sabha on July 19 he maintained that, “When we look at this issue through the prism of logic, it clearly emerges that there is no substance behind this sensationalism.”

So, where did the database originate? There are no answers yet. On July 20, Laurent Richard, founder of Forbidden Stories, told *India Today TV* that the “numbers were entered in the system by NSO”.

The list by itself is not conclusive proof of surveillance. Amnesty International has clarified that “the

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HAS CLARIFIED THAT THE MERE PRESENCE OF A PHONE NUMBER IN THE DATA IS NOT CONCLUSIVE PROOF OF SURVEILLANCE**

presence of a phone number in the data alone does not reveal whether a device was infected with Pegasus or subject to an attempted hack". The consortium believes the data is "indicative of the potential targets NSO's government clients identified in advance of possible surveillance attempts". The project adds that forensic examination of a cross-section of phones found traces of the spyware on 37 phones on the leaked list.

**HACK IN THE HOUSE** Uproar by the Opposition over the Pegasus issue during the Parliament's monsoon session, July 20

**SURVEILLANCE IN INDIA IS NOT ILLEGAL. A LIST OF 10 CENTRAL AGENCIES, INCLUDING THE IB AND R&AW, ARE AUTHORISED TO TAP TELEPHONES**

A July 18 statement by the NSO group says the Forbidden Stories report is "full of wrong assumptions" and "uncorroborated theories" that raise serious doubts about the reliability and interests of the sources.

Surveillance by state and central agencies in India is not illegal. Section 69 of the Information Technology Act, 2000, allows "the interception, monitoring and decryption of digital information in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, of the defence of India". A list of 10 central agencies, including the Intelligence Bureau and the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), are authorised to tap telephones. RTI revelations in 2013 pointed to interceptions being done on a 'staggering scale'—5,000 to 9,000 lawful interception orders were being issued by the central government on a monthly basis. Even the Right to Privacy Bill, yet to be passed, does not give Indian citizens blanket immunity from surveillance.

The Pegasus Project's implications, of citizens placed under surveillance by military-grade cyber weapons, are alarming but not entirely unexpected. The existence of this malware was revealed in 2016 (see '*On the Data Trail*') when the Canada-based Citizen Lab, which conducts R&D in cyberspace, global security and human rights at the University of Toronto's Munk School, discovered it in the phone of a UAE dissident. Its potential use in mass surveillance was divulged on October 29, 2019, when WhatsApp and its parent company Facebook took NSO to court in California for infecting around 1,400 mobiles phones worldwide via WhatsApp.

Digital surveillance is globally rampant. In 2013, former National Security Agency (NSA) employee Edward Snowden leaked top secret documents confirming the existence of a pervasive all-intrusive western global surveillance regime where spy agencies like the NSA had 'backdoored' Google and Facebook. (A 'backdoor' accesses a computer system or encrypted data, bypassing the system's security mechanisms.) The US snooped even on its own allies, like on German chancellor Angela Merkel. India, interestingly, was fifth on the list of the NSA's most spied-upon countries.

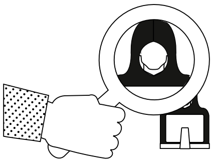
What the Israelis had done, as the Citizen Lab investigations seem to suggest, was level the playing field by hocking smaller versions of those powerful surveillance tools to the rest of the world. Pegasus' allure lies in its deniability and lethality. It is designed to self-destruct, leaving few traces behind. It can be remotely injected into a smartphone through a 'zero click attack', where the malware gets embedded in the phone without the target clicking on a link. Once embedded, it captures the phone, ferreting out messages, photos, text messages, passwords and even turning the camera and microphone on. It is why Israel mandates its sale be cleared by its defence ministry.

This, however, was not what Pegasus was developed for. An Indian security consultant, requesting anonymity, says the malware, as the NSO insists, was indeed developed for counter-terrorism applications. "In a Mumbai 26/11-like hostage situation, it can be injected into the phones of the terrorists to let security forces know what is going on inside, or the target's phone data can be extracted or manipulated to

## ON THE DATA TRAIL

**Aug. 24, 2016**
**Phone of UAE activist analysed by the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab; finds NSO developed malware Pegasus**

**June 2017**
**Citizen Lab finds multiple users across the globe. It finds five operators focused on Asia, including one it dubs "Ganges", which became active in June 2017**



**2018 Citizen Lab identifies suspected use of Pegasus in 45 countries**

*Icon illustrations by* RAJ VERMA

confuse them." The government of India has so far not denied the purchase of Pegasus. Sources indicate that a more advanced level of the malware has also been purchased and at least one Indian state government is believed to have purchased the spyware around 2017.

Proving that a government has snooped on its citizens is a tough ask because of the deniability and lack of traceability of the Pegasus malware. One former IPS officer, who wished to not be named, says he does not expect these revelations to make any headway because "we are confusing a moral issue with a legal issue". "If you cannot trace something as basic as the origin of a WhatsApp message, then how will you prove a sophisticated malware attack on a smartphone?" he asks.

### THE BIG PICTURE

There are larger and far more worrisome implications of the potential mass surveillance. There are justifiable fears that engaging with foreign malware providers could amount to outsourcing of a sovereign function—intelligence gathering operations. On July 15, just three days before the Pegasus Project revelations, Microsoft had announced that it had disrupted the use of "cyberweapons" developed by an Israel-based private sector offensive actor that it called 'Sourgum'. It was aided in its investigation by The Citizen Lab.

A senior Microsoft executive wrote in a blog post that "these agencies chose who to target and ran the actual operations themselves" and added that the malware was targeting over 100 victims around the world, including politicians, human rights activists, journalists, academics, embassy workers and dissidents.

NSO's Pegasus has a similar attack profile. It infects smartphones and extracts information from them. But could the overseas developer also have access to that raw data? If so, then the Indian state may have unwittingly allowed data of key government officials and politicians to be leaked overseas. "Using a foreign-developed malware is worrisome because it allows a foreign country to understand who our intelligence agencies are interested in and gives them access to damaging data on a wide range of citizens in positions of power and influence," says Bengaluru-based information warfare expert Pavithran Rajan. Such data could be intelligence gold. Indian cyber analysts say the raw data could potentially be accessed, manipulated or, worse, trafficked to other countries. "We have always spoken against the use of any foreign technology and tools, especially in telecom, defence and power sectors. The reliability and security of the technology or tools provided by foreign vendors is a very high-risk proposition and can pose a security risk to India," says Jiten Jain, director of cyber intelligence firm Voyager Infosec.

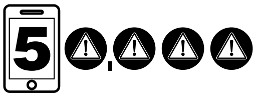
The NSO has said it does not access the data from its customers and The Citizen Lab's 2018 investigation hints that the Pegasus servers being installed in India is one way of ensuring that the data collected is localised. However, a former intelligence official, on condition of anonymity, says: "If I was the malware developer, I would be a fool to not instal a backdoor."

What prevents Indian agencies from developing similar capabilities in-house? Time and money, says the officer. He narrates how his request to develop a certain software application was overruled because a superior officer couldn't "wait till the cows come home". This is where Israeli firms like NSO step in with instant off-the-shelf surveillance products. Israel's monopoly over the Indian security software industry today matches its two-decade monopoly on India's military drone market.

**INDIAN CYBER ANALYSTS SAY THE RAW DATA GATHERED COULD POTENTIALLY BE ACCESSED, MANIPULATED OR TRAFFICKED**

The allure of Israel's over-the-counter malware is irresistible. It gives governments the enormous power of information. But these are short term benefits that could prove dangerous in the long run. It works like "crack cocaine", says the former intelligence official. "Once a government is hooked onto the product, it can be sold a steady line of increasingly sophisticated versions to break into more advanced versions of smartphone operating systems," he says. The seller has a foot in the door—its government has leverage over the Indian government and both, potentially, have access to a vast trove of raw intelligence harvested from Indians in positions of power. Gathering intelligence in the digital world is never a one-way street. ■

**July 20, 2021** Ruckus in Parliament after it is revealed that opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, an SC judge, a former election commissioner and a cabinet minister are in a new list



**July 18, 2020** Forbidden Stories and Amnesty International Investigation in world media; puts out list of 50,000 phone no. that may have been identified as people of interest

**Nov. 1, 2019** IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad responds to Pegasus revelations, says India concerned at breach of privacy but denies any unlawful interception was carried out

**Oct. 2019** WhatsApp and Facebook take Israeli firm NSO to a US district court, accusing them of sending malware to over 1,400 WhatsApp accounts worldwide, including some in India

CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

**THE BIG MOVE** PM Modi with the new Union cooperation minister Amit Shah

**SPECIAL REPORT**
**GOVERNANCE**

# THE NEW CENTRE OF COOPERATION

**The new cooperation ministry has raised alarm in states and invited restraining comments from the Supreme Court but a 'national cooperative framework' is not without merit**

By Anilesh S. Mahajan and Kiran D. Tare

# ON

On July 6, Prime Minister Narendra Modi surprised everyone by constituting a new ministry of cooperation, with a government press release stating that the new entity would help cooperatives across states progress (‘*sahkar se samriddhi*’) as a true people-based movement reaching the grassroots. In the cabinet reshuffle the next day, Union home minister Amit Shah was given charge of the new ministry. As expected, the move has raised hackles in the opposition, who fear that more than the well-being of the cooperatives, there may be a “sinister agenda” behind the move, as CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury put it.

But even as the wheels started turning, the new ministry’s offices were being set up and there was talk of a new ‘national cooperative framework’, the Supreme Court stepped in to apply the brakes. On July 20, the apex court was categorical in stating that the Centre has legislative power with respect to only multi-state cooperative societies (those not confined to just one state). It also made it clear that states have exclusive power to legislate on topics reserved for them. This is extremely significant, as cooperation is a state subject. Thus, the SC upheld an eight-year-old Gujarat High Court verdict limiting the Centre’s say in the cooperative sector. Incidentally, it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as then chief minister of Gujarat, who had in 2013 challenged certain provisions of the 97th constitutional amendment that empowered the Centre to design a framework for the cooperative sector.

Banking expert Vidyadhar Anaskar says the Centre will now have to seek permission from each of the 28 states if it wants to create a ‘national framework’ for the co-operative sector. However, this will be virtually impossible with BJP antagonists in power in states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh where cooperative movements are strong.

**By 2017, the BJP had taken control of all the dairy cooperatives in Gujarat too. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that the cooperative network has helped the BJP wipe out the opposition in various pockets of the state**

It will also test Shah’s mettle, though he has a foot in the door with access to the multi-state co-ops (which come under the ambit of the central Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act of 2002).

## Another Shah show?

Shah is no stranger to such battles, especially in the cooperatives sector. Indeed, his political journey started through Gujarat’s cooperative banks. For many years, he even chaired the board of the Ahmedabad District Cooperative Bank (ADCB). Legend has it that Shah turned around ADCB, which had a registered net loss of Rs 20 crore when he took over in 2000, with a profit of Rs 6 crore the next fiscal (he apparently did this by getting the bank into securities’ trading).

Shah also played a big role in saving the Madhepura Mercantile Cooperative Bank from going under in 2001, which earned him brownie points with the then BJP leadership in the state and Centre. Shah quit as chairman of ADCB after Modi, then the new Gujarat CM, got him in as MoS for home in his cabinet in 2002. However, he continued to keep a close eye on the state’s district cooperative banks. By 2016, the BJP had edged out the Congress in all 33 district cooperative banks in Gujarat.

The same is true of Gujarat’s famed dairy cooperatives, including Amul. By 2017, the BJP had taken control of all of them. It’s a formidable political weapon too, when one considers credit lines and the fact that in over 97 per cent of Gujarat’s 17,000-odd villages, dairies are a huge part of the economy. Shah learnt the lessons of political manoeuvring during his association with the cooperative sector in Gujarat. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that the cooperative network has helped the BJP wipe out the opposition in various pockets of the state.

The opposition fears the newly minted ministry of cooperation is a way of exporting the ‘Gujarat model’ to other states in the country, though it will take heart from the Supreme Court ruling. As per the seventh schedule of the Constitution, the incorporation, regulation and even winding up of cooperatives is a state subject; the Centre has a limited role to play. States where the cooperative sector is pivotal in politics, such as Maharashtra, are particularly worried. On July 16, former agriculture minister and NCP chief Sharad Pawar met Prime Minister Modi to convey his party’s apprehensions about the “formation of the cooperation ministry and the amendment to the Banking Regulation Act” (the NCP and the Congress have a stranglehold on the sugar cooperatives and co-op banks in the state). Some of those apprehensions are relevant even with the new SC restraints, for many co-op banks are multi-state entities, and will fall under Shah's new ministry.

Former Kerala finance minister Thomas Isaac, too, has red-flagged the co-op banks issue. He pointed out that there are 870 registered cooperatives in the state that want to run 'Hindu banks' in Kerala (their stated slogan is 'Hindu money belongs to Hindus'). Some of them are multi-state cooperative societies and Isaac fears the new Shah ministry's writ will soon run in these institutions. Many of them also run chit funds, which means a fairly large and potentially manipulable customer base.

The tussle to control the cooperatives sector is also about quid pro quos, extending largesse and, in turn, having the backing of a trusted votebank. Maharashtra is a prime example, with its strong network of cooperative bodies. NCP boss Pawar, his nephew and state deputy CM Ajit Pawar and other party leaders have a major stake in the state's cooperative sector. In fact, the Congress and NCP have controlled it for decades, a hegemony the BJP has been trying to break for over a decade. At present, Maharashtra has around 225,000 cooperative bodies, with some like Gokul, a dairy unit in Kolhapur, considered to be more influential than the post of an MLA or MP.

## Cracking the code

Cooperatives in India are mostly grassroots organisations formed to harness the power of collective bargaining for a common goal. In agriculture, dairy, sugar, textile and other sectors, cooperatives have been formed with the pooled resources of farmers and other workers. The biggest beneficiaries of state funds and subsidies are the cooperatives in the finance, sugar and dairy segments. In the current fiscal (FY22), the agriculture credit target was enhanced to Rs 16.5 lakh crore, and the rural infrastructure development fund to Rs 40,000 crore. Most of these funds are routed through cooperatives. In addition to this, many states also provide funds through cooperatives to build farm infrastructure, for micro-irrigation, and to buy raw material like seed, fertilisers and manure.

India currently has 194,195 cooperative dairy societies and 330 cooperative sugar mills, according to agriculture ministry data. In 2019-20, dairy cooperatives around the country procured 48 million litres of milk from 17 million members and sold 37 million litres of liquid milk every day. As for the sugar co-op mills, they manufacture 35 per cent of the sugar produced in India.

The NDA-1 government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee had passed a law in 2002 allowing multi-state cooperative societies (MSCS), to help co-ops diversify and operate outside their home state.

For finance, the village-level primary agricultural credit societies (PACS) formed by farmer associations and front-loaded with the district central cooperative banks (DCCB), determine the grassroots-level credit flow (the PACS anticipate the credit demand of a village and make the demand to the DCCB). The NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) 2019-20 annual report identified 95,238 PACS, 363 DCCBs and 33 state cooperative banks in the country. This is in addition to the 1,482 urban and 58 multi-state cooperative banks. Some justify the formation of a separate ministry and the RBI monitoring on grounds that in the past there have been allegations of scams in several cooperatives—in the absence of regulations, money was siphoned off to fund businesses of politicians, bureaucrats and, in many cases, cooperative leaders themselves.

The Centre has been pushing reforms in the financial sector cooperatives after the Rs 6,500 crore PMC

> **“In India, the cooperative movement has largely failed except in some states.... A central ministry can play a positive role by synergising efforts and weeding out contradictions”**
>
> **A.K. GUPTA,**
> Former professor, IIM Ahmedabad; Founder, Honey Bee Network

> **“If the national cooperative framework is implemented well, it can create more entrepreneurial opportunities, even avenues for farmers to get better value for their produce”**
>
> **SATISH MARATHE,**
> Sahakar Bharati head and RBI board member

(Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative) Bank scam broke in 2019 in Mumbai. In September last year, the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, was amended and the RBI was given powers to regulate operations of urban and multi-state cooperative banks. On June 25 this year, the RBI tightened the screws and set the standards for appointments of CEOs and whole-time directors, aligning them with norms for private banks. This means no mainstream politician—elected to the state assembly or Parliament—can be appointed to these posts.

Pawar has already raised objections on this, calling it a breach of federalism and the state's powers. In a letter to Modi, he said the Banking Regulation Act is 'in conflict, most specifically, with the 97th constitutional amendment, State Cooperative Societies Acts and with the cooperative principles. The amended act overrules various provisions of the Cooperative Act in regard to the formation of the board and election of chairman, appointment of managing director etc. by holding a caveat in terms of such appointments'.

### Co-op logjams

Before the creation of the cooperation ministry, the Centre oversaw the cooperatives sector as a section of the agriculture ministry. But with cooperatives diversifying in the past few decades to non-agricultural sectors like housing, urban finance and labour, the logic of retaining them under the agriculture ministry has become untenable.

Anil K. Gupta, a former professor at IIM Ahmedabad and founder of the Honey Bee Network, says, "In India, apart from some states, the cooperative movements have failed. But they must succeed if the country has to chart an inclusive growth trajectory. The central ministry can play a positive role by synergising efforts of several ministries and weeding out contradictions."

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had, in her budget speech earlier this year, announced the ministry's commitment to strengthening the cooperatives. The RSS-linked outfit, Sahakar Bharati, had also been constantly pushing for it. "There is a need for capacity building, skill development of management, upgrading infrastructure along with developing access to the capital markets," says Satish Marathe, who leads Sahakar Bharati and also sits on the RBI board.

The other reason proffered for a central ministry is that cooperative institutions currently get capital from the Centre, either as equity or working capital, for which the state governments stand guarantors. This formula has seen most of the funds going to a few states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka while others are left playing catch-up. Under the new ministry, the cooperative structure could possibly get a new lease of life and more clarity on access to fresh capital. Also, some of the biggest names in cooperatives are the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (Amul) and the Tamil Nadu Handloom Weavers' Co-operative Society Ltd. (Co-optex). Despite having a healthy balance sheet, these entities are not listed on the stock exchanges because of complexities in the co-op space. With a central ministry overseeing matters, stakeholders feel doors could open (with changes in the laws) for the cooperatives to access capital markets.

Both Marathe and Gupta cite these examples to press the case for a national cooperative framework. "If implemented well, this can create more entrepreneurial opportunities, even avenues for farmers to get better value for their produce," says Marathe. He says the strengthening of the cooperative movement could also reduce exploitation by middlemen. "There is a need to bring in acts governed by other ministries to get real benefits. For example, if the Forest Rights Act is clubbed with this, it can open up the agroforestry industry for tribals," says Gupta. But both Marathe and Gupta reserve judgment on where this is headed till they have read the fineprint. ■

**194,195**

COOPERATIVE DAIRY SOCIETIES IN INDIA

**330**

COOPERATIVE SUGAR MILLS; THEY PRODUCE 35% OF THE SUGAR IN INDIA

**1,482**

URBAN COOPERATIVE BANKS

**58**

MULTI-STATE COOPERATIVE BANKS

# A BREAK WITH THE PAST

## FIRST-TIME CHIEF MINISTER M.K. STALIN PROJECTS A REFRESHING FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY AND TRANSPARENT GOVERNANCE RATHER THAN POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY IN ADMINISTRATION

**By Amarnath K. Menon**

*Photograph by* BANDEEP SINGH

In Tamil Nadu, where politics and cinema blend easily, the 100th day of an inaugural is a special occasion. Ahead of that milestone in office, first-time chief minister M.K. Stalin is determined to demonstrate that his government is a break with the past five decades of Dravidian rule in the state. Stalin, 68, is only the third chief minister from the DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam), after his father M. Karunanidhi and C.N. Annadurai earlier. The seventh-term MLA has rich experience in both politics and administration, having been a minister and deputy chief minister as well as a proactive opposition leader during the regimes of the rival AIADMK (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam).

With the DMK alliance's commanding victory in the assembly election in April (159 of 234 seats), Stalin leads a stable government and has the opportunity to reimagine Tamil Nadu's development, both in vision and scale. "Tamil Nadu should become the most attractive industrial destination in South Asia and provide human capital to the world. There should be no economic or social disparity here," he said on July 9 while addressing the first virtual meeting of the newly constituted Chief Minister's Economic Advisory Council (CMEAC). Stalin emphasised that Tamil Nadu was ready for comprehensive and swift change and had the potential to emerge as a model state in the country. Growth, he added, should not be restricted to economic prosperity but should also usher in societal reforms and educational advancement. The members of the CMEAC are Nobel laureate economist Esther Duflo of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan; Arvind Subramanian, former chief economic advisor to the Union government; development economist Jean Drèze; and former Union finance secretary S. Narayan.

### ADMINISTRATIVE OVERHAUL

Rising above the politics of intense rivalry between the two Dravidian majors, Stalin has declared himself as the chief minister of the entire state, including people who did not vote for the DMK. Unlike his predecessors, who kept political rivals at an arm's length, he included C. Vijayabaskar, health minister in the previous AIADMK government, in the state's Covid advisory committee. Recognising merit, he retained Dr J. Radhakrishnan as health secretary while shuffling around some top bureaucrats.

To build a responsive and accountable administration, Stalin brought in select IAS officers on key positions, such as the new chief secretary, V. Irai Anbu, and several officers appointed to the chief minister's office (CMO). The DMK government is also looking to appoint more IAS recruits as district collectors rather than relying on officers promoted from the state administrative service, who are not only older but considered to be often pliable. "There is a refreshing change in the choice of administrators for key jobs in Tamil Nadu. It's a good start," says former civil servant M.G. Devasahayam.

Stalin seems to dislike party propaganda in the garb of social welfare. Political observers point to the distribution of 14 kinds of food/ household products to the state's 20 million ration card holders on the occasion of Karunanidhi's 98th birth anniversary on June 3 as a case in point. The packets did not carry photographs of Karunanidhi

or Stalin. Under AIADMK rule in the past, doles would invariably carry stickers of party supremo J. Jayalalithaa. While Stalin has shunned such gimmicks—at least for now—sections of DMK workers feel that extending welfare without putting their party's stamp on it will deny the party some of the political capital it might have earned.

But Stalin believes if his government delivers, electoral dividends will follow. He has repeatedly talked about running a transparent government where ministers and officials not only know their duties but also their rights. This is unlike anything seen in the past 10 years of AIADMK rule. "Emphasising on administrative efficacy over political pragmatism and engaging with public officials and professionals rather than assuming that work will happen are some of the hallmarks of Stalin's style of functioning," says Ramu Manivannan, head of the department of politics and public administration, University of Madras. "Stalin is betting on good governance. He wants to be engaged with the bureaucracy rather than be seen as controlling it."

Stalin has sent a message down the DMK rank and file that nobody should take advantage of the party being in power, interfere with governance at any level or harass the public and political rivals. The bureaucracy has been instructed not to give in to pressure from party leaders. Significantly, a few of Stalin's ministers handling key portfolios have interacted with the media, unlike the days of Karunanidhi when they would remain tightlipped. Political observers say it indicates greater democracy within not just the government but also the DMK under Stalin. They believe this comes from his stature as the undisputed leader of his party.

In a display of collective responsibility, in the first few weeks of the government, some ministers even took media questions on portfolios they were not in charge of. Foremost among them was the articulate finance minister Palanivel Thiagarajan (PTR). He candidly spoke about the state government's plans to reform the management of temples, with a qualifier that decisions would finally rest with his colleague and minister for Hindu religious and charitable endowments, P.K. Sekar Babu. "Stalin's choice of a technocrat as finance minister, though one rooted in Dravidian ideology, the constitution of CMEAC, and his acknowledgement that Tamil Nadu's economy was in a mess but he would do what it takes to put it back on track are unprecedented initiatives for any regional or national party to risk," says political commentator N. Sathiya Moorthy.

## ↘ WORRYING DEBTS

Stalin's major challenge will be the Tamil Nadu economy. Hit hard by the pandemic, the state's debt is expected to be over Rs 5 lakh crore in 2021-22. Its public sector enterprises have a debt burden of around Rs 2 lakh crore. Revenue is growing only through a few departments. The GST regime has deprived the state of the right to levy taxes and, therefore, it needs to strengthen itself by monetising its assets and resources. "Our government's priority is to fix Tamil Nadu's financial condition in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, increasing the state's contribution to the national GDP, from the current 10 per cent to 14-15 per cent, and reducing interest payments of the state," says PTR. The measures planned include safeguarding MSMEs and improving ease of doing business to attract investors and create jobs.

Stalin has been bold to shed some of the DMK's agnostic, anti-Brahmin ideology that had commenced with Jayalalithaa, a Brahmin, becoming chief minister in 1991. Three members of the CMEAC are Tamil Brahmins, supposedly anathema for old-school Dravidian ideologues. From day one, Stalin has put religious endowments min-

## THE GREAT TEMPLE RUN

Even as the M.K. Stalin government takes stock of available and encroached temple land in order to recover or monetise the assets, it is planning other far-reaching reforms, such as appointing women as priests in temples. Though the DMK claims to be a party of agnostics, the government is taking keen interest in the management of Hindu temples. Appointing women as priests is an initiative to empower them.

More changes are on the cards. Temple land in the state has been leased out on low rentals. The Hindu religious & charitable endowments (HR&CE) department has published title documents related to over 350,000 acres of temple land on its website. The process of retrieving the balance temple land is underway. A massive drive has been launched to identify temple properties in urban areas, evict encroachers and fence the premises. This will be followed by a differential GPS survey in order to digitise every inch of temple property and upload it on the official website.

Observers point out that the HR&CE department itself needs overhaul as its inefficiency has put cultural heritage at risk. Idols have been stolen and at least 6,414 of the 40,000-odd temples in the state are damaged. The department does not have any inventory on the idols, its jewels and other assets. The Madras High Court recently directed the department to streamline the generation and use of funds, and prevent idol thefts.

The department administers over 38,000 temples, of which more than 34,000 have an annual income of less than Rs 10,000. They are dependent on the state. Stalin has promised to provide Rs 1,000 crore for temple renovation.

**THE CM'S WATCHING** At the launch of a Covid vaccination drive in a Chennai school, May 27

ANI

ister Sekar Babu on the job of visiting the major state government-run temples with the aim of retrieving portions of their vast properties lost to private lessees and sub-lessees over the decades. He has also got the list of properties of these temples uploaded online, apart from announcing various measures for streamlining temple management (see *The Great Temple Run*).

Dravidian rule, be it by the DMK or AIADMK, has been marked by an unedifying track record of corruption over the decades, so it has been a daunting task for Stalin to begin on a clean slate. "While the choice of bureaucrats for select posts, including in the CMO, suggests that he has picked some individuals with high integrity, the same cannot be said of all his ministers. Some ministers face cases and old complaints in departments commonly identified with corruption, such as municipal administration, highways and public works," says Jayaram Venkatesan, founder- convenor of Arappor Iyakkam, an anti–corruption watchdog in the state. Several cases filed by Arappor Iyakkam against ministers of the previous AIADMK government are pending with the state's Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption or are being heard by the courts. The DMK, too, had made allegations against AIADMK ministers during the assembly poll campaign and presented the governor with a 'corruption list' of the previous government.

As chief minister, Stalin will be expected to act on these cases that his party had raised. At present, he appears to be accommodative. What will eventually happen may also depend on how others act and react, especially those in the AIADMK, when he allows due process in pursuing corruption charges against former ministers. "Stalin is showing maturity. He can deal with compliments and criticisms with great balance because he has spent long years being on the edge of ascendancy and yet away from the top post," feels Manivannan.

**STALIN'S MAJOR CHALLENGE WILL BE THE PANDEMIC-HIT ECONOMY. THE STATE'S DEBT IS EXPECTED TO BE OVER Rs 5 LAKH CRORE IN 2021-22**

## TUSSLE WITH THE CENTRE

The DMK dispensation's relations with the Narendra Modi government is going to be another of Stalin's big challenges. Since he assumed office, the DMK has referred to the central government only as Union government (*Ondriya Arasu* in Tamil), arguing that it encapsulates the 'philosophy of federalism'. Analysts say the Stalin government is most likely to build pressure on the Centre on several of Tamil Nadu's demands. One of them is the call for scrapping the NEET medical entrance exam so that the state can leverage the large number of medical colleges for which infrastructure was built with investments from within Tamil Nadu. NEET, Tamil Nadu argues, deprives MBBS aspirants from the state admission to these colleges.

The coming months may see Stalin getting more vocal about the autonomy of states. In June, he wrote to the chief ministers of most non-BJP ruled states to oppose the draft Indian Ports Bill, 2021, which, critics argue, will divest state governments of powers related to the development and regulation of minor ports. Earlier, he wrote to the CMs to build consensus on demanding a moratorium on loans taken by small businesses.

Stalin has also demanded withdrawal of the draft Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which seeks to give the Centre powers to reverse certifications given to films by the censor board. "Stalin is opposed to NEET and GST, in particular, and overall the attitude of the Union government towards states. On the demand for giving more powers to the states, Tamil Nadu's voice matters. Stalin, therefore, realises his unique role among influential voices in the country," says Manivannan.

Stalin has begun his chief ministerial innings on a promising note, showing that he has both the intent and ideas to transform governance. His administration has fulfilled some of the poll promises, such as free travel for women in ordinary fare buses across Tamil Nadu and slashing prices of 'Aavin' milk supplied by the state-run dairy. To show he walks the talk, Stalin, on his very first day in office (May 7), tasked an IAS officer with redressing public grievances he had received during the poll campaign. But several challenges await him, beginning with an anticipated third wave of Covid. "The Stalin government's policies and programmes and his governance model will be better known only after the pandemic is behind the state," says Moorthy. The Tamil Nadu CM will be a keenly watched administrator in the months ahead. ■

SPECIAL REPORT
**THE NEW OFFICE**

# BIDDING THE OFFICE GOODBYE

**The workspace as we knew it is a thing of the past. Flexible working patterns, work from anywhere and hybrid models of work are the new normal**

**By Shwweta Punj** / *Illustrations by* NILANJAN DAS

**For millions of Indians,** "Going to the office" has meant economic empowerment, progress, independence, aspiration. The past year, though, has changed that. One of the casualties of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the office space as we know it. Employers have been forced to rethink how their employees work outside the big campuses and offices built painstakingly, designed to keep employees productive and in office for hours.

The realisation that the current model—with its regimented style of work, strict hierarchies and 'fixed hours'—is flawed has dawned on employers across the world. From Silicon Valley to India, employers and employees have spent the past year re-evaluating their priorities. While employers have been figuring out how to measure productivity, prune investments in office spaces and keep staff motivated, employees have taken this time to take stock of their priorities in life, how they work and spend their time.

Tanya Sharma (name changed on request), 33, joined a global consulting, auditing firm in Gurgaon barely a week before the nationwide lockdown was announced on March 24, 2020. She has since been working from home and has never met her team in person. After the initial challenges of bonding with her team virtually, setting up a designated workplace for herself within her home and sensitising her family that working from home does not mean she is on a holiday, Sharma has fallen into a good rhythm. And while she misses the informal banter and the energy of the office, she does not miss the commute from her Noida home to Gurgaon. She also cherishes the extra time she gets to spend with her eight-year-old daughter. For now, Sharma has been asked to continue to work from home and, in fact, the consulting firm has vacated one of its office spaces in Gurgaon. Going forward, Sharma says, she would prefer a hybrid working model rather than a complete WFH set-up.

### THE TECH REVOLUTION

As the post-pandemic economy reopens, employers are looking into the gains made from the acceleration of adoption of technology. Jithesh Anand, founder and CEO at eXlygenze SenseWorks PLC, has been working with companies across sectors, helping them upgrade their technology and HR policies. He says: "The pandemic has accelerated the need to undo our latent work ways. The immediate future will have hybrid workspaces. Location independence will be a relevant factor in our lives."

> COUNTRIES AND COMPANIES ARE **EXPERIMENTING WITH FOUR-DAY WORK WEEKS** WITH MANY REPORTING AN **INCREASE IN PRODUCTIVITY**

But in a country like India, what works for one, doesn't always work for another. Most employers that INDIA TODAY spoke to said the work that can be done virtually will continue to be done virtually, but the models of flexibility will vary.

Nadia Chauhan, joint managing director and CMO, Parle Agro, for instance, is betting on the virtual meetings becoming par for the course since they have proven to be more efficient and cost-effective. "Pre-pandemic, every meeting with our teams in either north, south or east would have to be scheduled in advance and would depend on our travel plans," says Chauhan says. "Today, we connect seamlessly with our teams across the country. This, I feel, is a massive advantage." Anand, agrees. He recently got called in for a physical meeting with a traditional business client but instead of making the trip to their office, he convinced them to get on a virtual meeting platform. "They were initially hesitant, but the meeting was still as productive as it would have been in-person," he says.

However, Chauhan adds that they are "extremely keen to get back on campus". "Our goal is to be strikingly disruptive and the WFH culture doesn't create the drive to challenge ourselves and break the mould."

Meanwhile, Satyajit Mohanty, chief human resources officer, Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals, says the company is giving full autonomy to employees to decide how best to do their work. "It is up to the business leaders and their respective teams to decide how they work best. However, in the longer-term, we will be moving to a hybrid model. For instance, in our head office, we will be shifting to a rotational WFH policy."

### REIMAGINING THE WORK CULTURE

Business leaders are still navigating the challenges and demands of the post-pandemic economy and what it means for work spaces. Global tech giants, such as Twitter, Shopify, Reddit and Dropbox, have given their employees the option to work from home permanently, while financial industry majors like J.P. Morgan and Goldman Sachs are expecting their employees back in the office soon. There are many big companies in India that have scaled down their physical office spaces, especially in tier 2 and tier 3 cities. "One can't accurately predict the future, but the pandemic has certainly changed how we work," says Aditya Priyadarshan, managing director, strategy and consulting (talent and organisation), Accenture India. "In fact, our recent report, *The Future of Work: Productive Anywhere*, encompassing more than 9,000 workers around the world, discovered that most people want a hybrid model—sometimes working remotely and sometimes onsite."

A study by Gartner, a global research and advisory company, this year found that nearly 50 per cent of global organisations are finding a WFH model beneficial. A global workplace analytics shows that an organisation that works remotely for 50 per cent of their time can save nearly $11,000 for every person per year.

Pankaj Bansal, co-founder and group CEO of PeopleStrong, a leading HR solutions and technology company, identifies some of the key trends that will emerge in the post-pandemic workspace. "There will be more hybrid workspaces, location won't be an impediment and traditional office set ups will die out. Wellness will become mainstream with several stakeholders taking responsibility for individuals' mental and physical health," says Bansal, who is also part of a three-member task force formed to assist the government in bringing major bureaucratic reforms through its 'Mission Karamyogi. "New-age digital models and solutions will be used to drive delivery mechanisms and work cultures. People will be measured on productivity and outcomes rather than attendance and hours. Those who question the new norms will be deadwood," he adds. Anand of eXlygenze SenseWorks cites an example of a factory owner who chose to shut down operations for several months rather than invest in smart manufacturing practices. "They have gone into a limbo and are planning to shut down," he says

Even within organisations, formats could vary depending on different geographies, businesses and functions. A report by consulting giant McKinsey on the future of work states: "Permanent change will also require exceptional change in management skills and constant pivots based on how well the effort is working over time."

**"IN THE FUTURE, PEOPLE WILL BE MEASURED ON PRODUCTIVITY AND OUTCOMES RATHER THAN ATTENDANCE AND HOURS"**

**-PANKAJ BANSAL**
*Co-founder & Group CEO, PeopleStrong*

### SHAKING THINGS UP

The pandemic has shed light on maintaining a better work-life balance. Countries and companies are experimenting with four-day work weeks with many reporting an increase in productivity. Flexible working hours will also enable more women to come back into the workforce. Neha Bagaria, founder of JobsForHer, a jobs platform for women, reports an increase in 'work from anywhere' listings on the platform over the past year which is bringing a lot of highly skilled women back into the workforce. "Flexibility at the workplace is a massive opportunity creator for women," she says. But lack of camaraderie, mentoring relationships and fear of being overlooked are some of the cons of remote work that organisations will need to work on.

Our idea of what a typical office looks like—with its private offices, cubicles, pantries and meeting rooms—will have to change. Organisations will have to use technology intelligently—to manage the air flow within the office and ensure social distancing between desks—to enable employees to return to the office. As per the McKinsey report, organisations could create workspaces dedicated specifically to in-person collaboration that cannot happen remotely rather than focus on individual workspaces. The big worry is that those who continue working remotely will be considered corporate second-class citizens. For that, McKinsey says that to maintain productivity, collaboration and learning, the boundaries between being physically present in office and out of office must collapse. "Always-on videoconferencing, seamless in-person and remote collaboration spaces (such as virtual whiteboards) and asynchronous collaboration and working models will quickly shift from being futuristic ideas to standard practice," notes the McKinsey report.

### WHO CAN GO HYBRID?

The unorganised, informal economy accounts for nearly half of India's GDP and 80 to 90 per cent of the nation's workforce. And despite the benefits of remote working, Indian workplaces and employers across several sectors do not have the option to allow remote or hybrid work. The analysis by Accenture points out that a majority of roles in professional services, communication and financial services rank high for remote working, while hospitality, retail and healthcare industries don't. "Companies will have to focus on proactively

## HOW TO EMBRACE THE NEW WORKSPACE

- ↘ Organisations could scale down office spaces
- ↘ Organisations could create workspaces specifically designed to support remote interactions
- ↘ Redesigns could include more space being allocated to collaboration rooms

## NEW RULES OF WORK

- ↘ Some on-site customer-facing jobs have shifted to digital mode in the form of e-commerce and digital transactions. The trend will be a mix of offline and online
- ↘ Travel, leisure and hospitality sectors will see a mix of automation and offline services with stringent hygiene norms
- ↘ Remote work will be possible in nearly all computer-based work
- ↘ Outdoor production and maintenance arena, employing 35-55% of the total workforce, will see smarter manufacturing practices, strict social distancing norms

reimagining their workplaces to suit emerging trends and engaging its remote workforce to improve collaboration, agility and well-being," adds Priyadarshan.

It might be tempting to revert to the old ways of working, but embracing the future is the only way forward. Bansal of PeopleStrong gives the example of Amara Raja Batteries, a traditional, manufacturing business headquartered in Tirupati, that quickly moved to a "smarter way of doing things". It established clear protocols—of sanitising and social distancing, on how to board the bus running between the factory and residential colonies close to the campus and staggered work hours for employees.

**"FLEXIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE IS A MASSIVE OPPORTUNITY CREATOR FOR WOMEN, ENABLING THEM TO RETURN TO THE WORK FORCE"**

**-NEHA BAGARIA**
*Founder, JobsForHer*

Another reason why the WFH model might not work for all is simply because Indian homes are not built for it. They don't have the space for home offices, a reality that many employers have become increasingly cognizant of. Studies have shown that productivity of employees in a WFH scenario is highly dependent on the tools the employees have. Many companies are putting in place policies that will enable employees to claim charges for working out of a co-working space.

Nidhi Dhanju, chief people officer with the Singapore-headquartered Anchanto, a B2B SaaS product company, says they are not planning to open their Pune office until October. The company, she adds, is still evaluating the possibility of a complete WFH set up since nearly all of their 200 employees have gone back to their hometowns. Their productivity continues to be high. And with the threat of the third wave still looming, "it is too much to ask them to come to the office. We have asked employees with small homes with no WFH spaces to look out for co-working stations."

As per the Accenture's report, 40 per cent of the workers surveyed felt they could be healthy and effective whether working onsite or remotely. What distinguished these 40 per cent was not the lack of negative stressors in their lives, but their abundance of resources–both at the individual and organisational levels. "Having resources nurtures an employee's wellness and productivity. What organisations need to focus on instead is providing the right resources to people onsite and remotely," it states.

Companies are reorienting their policies to focus on wellness and facilitating remote working experiences—from installing home offices (furniture, WiFi) for their employees, offering personalised wellness plans and investing in building digital fluency, to hot-desking, higher autonomy at work and giving them the option to work from anywhere.

The era of 'the office' with its banter by the water cooler, brainstorming sessions at the cafeteria and elevator pitches might have ended, but what awaits is a brand-new work space that is smarter, in tune with today's realities and forward looking. The future is here and employers that adapt quickly will survive and thrive. ■

BVLOS Experimental

# BETTING ON A DRONE BOOM

THE GOVERNMENT EASES DRONE LAWS TO ALLOW THE NASCENT INDUSTRY TO TAKE FLIGHT. CAN INDIA'S DRONE SECTOR NOW HIT THE Rs 3 LAKH CRORE MARK BY 2030?

**FLY HIGH**
A BVLOS drone of Throttle Aerospace Systems (TAS) delivering a package on a test flight near Bengaluru, June 21

MANJUNATH KIRAN / AFP

BY RAHUL NORONHA

Vishal Singh and Suhas Banshiwala had a particularly bright idea in 2013. They planned to use the then emerging drone technology for commercial applications such as carrying out land surveys. Their company, Aarav Unmanned Systems, which entered commercial operations in 2015, was only the second commercial drone company in the world. It has done well in the past six years, bagging contracts worth $4.5 million (around Rs 34 crore) from the public and private sectors. Aarav has an inventory of 40 drones right now and by next month will have augmented its fleet to 150 drones.

Vishal and Suhas were among several entrepreneurs of this nascent industry who were in a state of alarm when alleged Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists used two drones to drop bombs on the Jammu air force base on June 26. There were no casualties in the attack, but days later, the government banned drone flying in Srinagar with the administration asking owners to deposit all private drones at the police stations. FICCI estimates the drone industry in India to be worth $800 million (almost Rs 6,000 crore) and projected to grow to $40 billion (Rs 3 lakh crore) by 2030. Entrepreneurs had feared an era of tighter controls. The government, instead, went in the opposite direction. On July 14, it eased the Draft Drone Rules, giving in to many of the demands raised by the industry.

Thus the number of permissions required to operate or manufacture drones has been slashed. Most of the equipment requirements and operational restrictions are also a thing of the past. Earlier, all drones except those in the Nano category had to be equipped with a raft of technologies that at times made them unviable to operate. These included flashing anti-collision strobe lights, flight data logging capability, a secondary surveillance radar transponder, a real-time tracking system and a 360-degree collision avoidance system. Even Nano drones were required to have a Global Navigation Satellite System, Autonomous Flight Termination System (or Return to Home option), geo-fencing capability and flight controller. These requirements have now been replaced with safety features like ‘no permission, no take-off (NPNT)’, real-time tracking beacons and geo-fencing, all of which are to be notified in the future.

Crucially, the penalties imposed for violations under the UAS (Unmanned Aircraft Systems) Rules, 2021 have been drastically reduced in the draft Drone Rules from Rs 1.5 crore to just Rs 1 lakh (*see box*). The government’s move in this direction is indicative of the heft the drone sector has acquired—by way of its potential in applications and market growth—over the past few years. India is the world’s fastest growing drone market, according to some studies. Aarav, for instance, is part of Swamitva, or the village surveying work, of the Union government, in Karnataka, UP, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. Their other clients include Tata, Hindalco, Coal India and NTPC.

Since they were introduced around a decade ago, drones have become integral to at least 20 Indian industries. They map land holdings, are used to deliver medicines to remote areas, map the progress of infrastructure construction in the railways, telecom, power, oil and gas and land records and private security.

The draft rules are significantly more lenient than the UAS Rules, 2021 announced on March 12, 2021. Those have now been repealed. The draft rules are also the third piece of legislation since December 1, 2018, brought in to regulate the sector. So, how are the new proposed rules different from the version in March? Well, for one, they have been welcomed by industry stakeholders. “That a new set of rules were notified despite the Jammu attacks suggests the government is keen to clear a path for India to become a world leader in the drone sector,” says Smit Shah, director of the Drone Federation of India (DFI), an industry body representing 200 drone companies and 2,000 drone pilots.

Indeed, even as the drone sector was panicking, the Union government had attempted to allay fears after the Jammu incident. “Drones are the future of aviation, logistics, surveillance and warfare. The government will continue to give full support to the drone ecosystem,” Amber Dubey, joint secretary, ministry of civil aviation and head, drones division, had said then. He justified his statement, saying that “criminals too use mobiles and cars. One doesn’t shut down the manufacturing of cars and mobiles after a crime but improve our intelligence and redouble efforts to counter such incidents. The government has worked out liberalised drone rules that will help our home-grown drone start-ups, researchers and operators. Our world-class counter-drone systems will also be developed by these very same Indians,” he adds.

“The new rules are encouraging and positive. That the government continues the mandate for reforms as demanded by the drone sector and did not react to the Jammu attacks

# EASE OF DRONE BUSINESS

### THE JAMMU ATTACK WAS A SCARE, BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAS STILL RELAXED RULES FOR DRONE OPERATORS

## EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

**UAS Rules, 2021** All drones except in the Nano category must have flashing anti-collision strobe lights, flight data logging capability, a secondary surveillance radar transponder, a real-time tracking system and a 360 degree collision avoidance system. Even Nano drones were required to have a global navigation satellite system, autonomous flight termination system (or Return to Home option), geo-fencing capability and flight controllers

**Draft Drone Rules** Safety features like 'no permission, no take-off (NPNT)', real-time tracking beacon, geo-fencing etc. to be notified in future. Six-month lead time for compliance

## OPERATIONAL RESTRICTIONS

**UAS Rules, 2021** Micro and small drones could not fly above 60 m and 120 m respectively. If Nano drones exceeded parameters of speed and flight, they would be classified in the next higher category. Extent of no fly zone around sensitive locations was undefined in most cases

**Draft Drone Rules** Interactive airspace map with green, yellow and red zones will be displayed on the digital sky platform. Yellow zone reduced from 45 km to 12 km from the airport perimeter. No flight permission required up to 400 feet in green zones and up to 200 feet in the area between 8 and 12 km from the airport perimeter

## LICENCES AND FORMS

**UAS Rules, 2021** As many as 23 clearances required

**Draft Drone Rules** Total forms reduced to 6

## MAXIMUM FINE

**UAS Rules, 2021**
Rs 1.5 crore

**Draft Drone Rules**
Rs 1 lakh

## WHERE THEY ARE USED

AGRICULTURE

HEALTH

INFRASTRUCTURE (Railways, telecom, power, oil and gas)

LAND RECORDS

PRIVATE SECURITY

*Graphic by* TANMOY CHAKRABORTY

in a knee-jerk fashion is commendable," says Vipul. "The draft rules acknowledge that to counter the threat of drones we need to understand the technology around them," he added.

While the sector has supported the move, some sticky points remain. "The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), which issues permissions for the import of drones and drone components, and the Quality Council of India (QCI), which handles certification, should work in a time-bound manner," says Vipul. Other issues include the export criteria and providing a clause for test sites for drones that would help in R&D. Also, standards and rules applicable to Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations and Visual Line of Sight Operations (VLOS) need segregation. Vipul also feels that the draft rules are too lenient on certain points. "They allow micro drones to be operated by untrained people for recreational purposes. If so, it should provide designated sites for recreational flying," he says. Finally, the digital sky platform on which the implementation of the rules depends should be made fully functional.

**DRONES ARE NOW A BIG PART OF AT LEAST 20 INDIAN INDUSTRIES, PERHAPS WHY THE DRAFT RULES ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LENIENT THAN THE UAS RULES, 2021 FROM MARCH**

The Union government has invited objections and suggestions to the draft rules till August 5. After they are considered, the rules could be notified by August 15. Is this the much-needed boost that will help India's drone sector soar? The industry's reaction seems to suggest so. ■

# KARMA YOGI

Policy, intent and planning of Yogi Government has set new parameters of development in Uttar Pradesh.

# TEST, TRACE, TREAT AND VACCIN

**Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was always at the front line during the battle with covid epidemic. The readiness and commitment of Yogi Adityanath for the livelihood management and health security of the common people impressed even his critics. There is no other example of the dedication, commitment and vision which the Chief Minister showed to defeat the second wave of Corona. Even after getting infected by the deadly virus during the second wave of Corona the 'Karma Yogi' did not relent for a moment. While remaining in home isolation he not only conducted the review meetings with officers but also continued the virtual dialogue program with different sections of the society including farmers, health experts and members of the supervision committees.**

Right after getting the negative covid test report the chief minister reached ground zero to improve the health services. Fighting the covid-19 pandemic with the help of triple T formula of trace test and treat Yogi Adityanath was the first chief minister who reached at the door step of covid infected people and took information about the well being of them. The strategy of test trace and treat has broken the chain of infection. Yogi Adityanath launched the vaccination drive as a campaign to save people of the state from coronavirus. UP became the first state in the country to announce free covid vaccine for the people above 18 years of age. So with this a comprehensive approach towards safety from coronavirus continues and its positive results are also coming up.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath adopted the policy of decentralization of the system to arrange the fight against covid. Responsibility of top officials was decided and accountability was also ensured. Team 11 of Yogi Adityanath hit the headlines during the first wave of covid-19, when challenges were like management of migrant workers and ensuring availability of PPE kits. During the second wave the Chief Minister formed a 9 members team. This team looks after the works related with covid management at state level, takes policy decisions and implements them. During the second wave, the arrangement of beds and oxygen was the biggest task. At that time this team 9 excellently managed everything. The team 9 reports directly to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Many works including availability of beds and resources, works related to training and vaccination, medical kit, testing and works related to increase in health facilities, monitoring of integrated covid command centre and CM helpline, availability of oxygen, cleanliness drive, fogging sanitization, containment zone, law and order, weekly closing and ensuring the covid protocol world divided among these members. This system gave positive results also and on the same line teams were organised in districts also.

## COVID MANAGEMENT FROM COMMAND CENTRE

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath established an integrated covid command and control centre in every district of state to fight with the corona wave. The 24/7 active centre is managing all activities related to covid management whether it is testing, admission in hospitals, delivery of medicine and other things to patients in home isolation, ensuring ambulance to the patients, updating the information on covid portal related to admission and discharge timings or monitoring of surveillance and supervision teams, everything was operated from there. Skilled and trained persons were deputed in these centers. Everyday top officials of the district used to take meetings there. World health organisation also praised the covid command and control centre of Uttar Pradesh.

## EFFORTS OF SUPERVISION COMMITTEES

Covid infection was curbed in the state because of the visionary strategy of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The important parts of the strategy, supervision committees and rapid response teams are worth praising. These are two such organisations which played an important role in controlling the situation at micro level in urban areas as well as the remote rural villages. From the beginning of the second wave of foreigner Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath organised rapid response teams and supervision committees separately for rural and urban areas and adopted the strategy of door to door screening. With the help of four lakh members of 73441 supervision committees and 7761 skilled rapid response teams the decisive effort was made to break the chain of covid-19.

## MANTRA OF MICRO MANAGEMENT

Taking an important step towards the

# ATION STOPPED THE COVID WAVE

> The Uttar Pradesh government is creating micro containment zones on the principle of jahan bimar vahan upchar (where there is a patient, there should be treatment) and distributing medicines in villages and rural areas. IT is a very good step.
>
> **— Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India**

improvement in the system during covid crisis Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath implemented the sector system from districts to panchayat level. Generally this strategy is implemented to maintain law and order during elections or in a riot situation. But in the UP model an excellent effort was made by implementing micromanagement during the pandemic period. Districts were divided into sectors and then incharge magistrates were appointed for every sector who regularly visited covid hospitals and moved in their sector areas and insured admission and treatment of any covid patient found there. Not just that for the problems of Covid patient's, accountability of district magistrates and Chief medical officer's was fixed. This experiment also received laurels.

## UNIFIED EFFORTS OF YOGI FOR PREVENTION OF EPIDEMIC

### COVID BEDS

Around 1 lakh 80 thousand beds of L1 L2 and L3 categories were arranged in state for treatment of covid-19 patients. 25 government and 33 private medical colleges, medical universities and institutions are running in the state where 18 thousand 181 beds have been arranged and now its number is being doubled.

### MEDICAL COLLEGES

Establishment work of 30 new medical colleges in the state is almost complete. These medical colleges will strengthen the health services of the state. The appointment procedure of more than 450 faculty members in these colleges is continuing. The Chief Minister has ordered for transparent selection of faculty members. The government has taken the decision to establish a medical college in every district.

### COVID HOSPITALS

For prevention of Corona in rural areas 2 community health centres each in remote areas of all districts are being converted into dedicated covid hospitals. Each hospital will have 50 beds and L 1 category facilities. Oxygen plants are also being established in these hospitals.

### SANITIZATION

To break the chain of infection fogging, sanitization and cleanliness drive is being conducted in all rural and urban areas during weekend lockdown. 86700 persons in rural areas and 82000 employees in urban areas are working in this campaign. The Chief Minister himself monitored this campaign.

### TELE CONSULTATION

Tele consultation facility has been provided for non covid patients. District wise panel of experts has been set up for this purpose. This panel includes doctors of all streams. The number, time and expertise of the doctors are being circulated.

### AYUSH KIT

After directions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Ayush department of state approached 23 lakh people during covid period. Free of cost Ayush kit was distributed to around 20 lakh people by the department. Apart from it more than three lakh people associated and took tips on social media platforms and from Ayush kavach app.

### SANITIZER PROCUREMENT

97 sugar Mills and other units of a state procured around 3 crore lliter sanitizer during the second wave of covid. The sanitizer procured in sugar mills of Uttar Pradesh is not being supplied across the state but also to the other parts of country.

### TRANSPORT SERVICE

Likewise during the first wave of Corona, in the second wave also migrants and daily passengers were transported to their destination through more than 10 thousand buses of the Transport Corporation. These buses run after sanitization and with strict adherence to covid protocol. 55 thousand employees including station master and other category employees were deputed for this purpose on bus stations.

**The Government of India has taken a big decision to provide free vaccine to all citizens above the age of 18 years from June 21, 2021, for which Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed gratitude to the Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi.**

# SHIELD OF COVID VACCINATION INFRONT OF EPIDEMIC

Vaccination is the security cover from coronavirus. This security cover will be provided to every citizen of the state. Mr Yogi Adityanath has reiterated this on various occasions. This statement clearly states how important vaccination is in his government's policy. Perhaps this is the same dedication which has made vaccination a mega event in Uttar Pradesh. On an average more than 3 lakh people are being provided the cover of vaccination per day from 1 June. Within hours after Central Government's permission regarding vaccination of the people aged between 18 to 44 years, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced that from 1st May the vaccination for the said age group will start in Uttar Pradesh and it started from the decided date also. Today vaccination is going on smoothly across the state. Not just that special booths have been made for media, judiciary, Government employees and other categories and the parents of children aged below 12 years are getting vaccinated at special booths. UP is in first place in administering the maximum number of vaccines. Government is providing vaccines for people aged above 18 years.

## FOCUS ON RURAL AREAS

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the free vaccination campaign from 1st June In state to provide covid security cover to people aged between 18 to 44 years. The Chief Minister set the target to inoculate a total of 1 crore people during June month. For this purpose four workplace vaccination centers were opened in every district. Two special vaccination centres were also set up in every district for parents whose children are less than 12 years old. Vaccination was made available at more than 8000 centres in the state. The Yogi government achieved the target of 1 crore vaccination decided under the 'Mission June' 6 days early i.e. on 24 June only. Special vaccination campaign running under the supervision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is getting grand success across the state. Yogi has set the target to provide security cover of vaccines to 10 crore people in the next 3 months. To achieve this target Chief Minister Yogi has written letters to all 58758 gram pradhans of the state and asked for their help in the vaccination drive. In this letter chief minister has requested all pradhan to motivate and encourage people for vaccination and also remove their doubts regarding it.

Yogi government has given responsibility to village panchayat officers, Village development officers, village Pradhans, sakhi groups anganbadi workers, asha workers and local frontline workers for maximum vaccination of rural population. Guideline of health ministry says that for vaccination one needs to have identity card but Yogi Government has given directions that if anyone doesn't have any identity card he or she will not be denied vaccination. For this purpose a task force has been constituted in

- **Uttar Pradesh is the first state to launch a free covid vaccination campaign for people aged between 18 to 44 years.**
- **UP is number one in covid vaccination.**
- **Vaccination is available in more than 8000 centers in the state.**
- **UP has made special arrangements for vaccination of those who don't have any identification card.**

every districts who identifies such persons who don't have any identity card with the help of nodal officers. Officer has deputed facilitators for identification of different groups. These facilitators are identifying the beneficiaries.

## PRAISES FROM WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

The World Health Organization praised the policy adopted by the Yogi Government to keep the villages safe from covid pandemic. At the time of launching this special campaign chief minister has said that we have to make strong arrangements to save villages from covid infection. In this situation an elaborate campaign of covid testing should be launched in all 97941 revenue villages of the state. This will be a unique and elaborate testing drive of its own kind in the country. This vast testing campaign was launched from 5th of May under which 4 lakh members of 73441 supervision committee used to go door to door and conduct the screening. If any symptomatic patient was found during this exercise then immediately a rapid response team was contacted for testing and home isolation or institutional Quarantine was recommended as per the requirement. Medical kits were provided to patients and their family members. After 9th May the campaign was reviewed and it was found that 68% villages were unaffected from infection. The campaign continued but this report became crucial in deciding the strategy in the coming days. Infact Wonderful work has been done in terms of tracing and surveillance in Uttar Pradesh. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that to break the chain of covid, improvement in contact tracing and surveillance is a must. During the whole covid period chief minister assessed the district wise contact racing report daily. Directions were given to the concerned districts to increase their activities on the basis of reports and monitoring was done. In maximum districts 15 to 20 contact tracing was done after confirmation of one covid positive patient. This reduced the spread of infection gradually. In the same way surveillance teams kept an eye over each house in villages. 18 crore people have been contacted till date in Uttar Pradesh which has a population of around 24 crore.

# UTTAR PRADESH NUMERO UNO IN CORONA TESTING

- Last year only 72 tests were conducted in the lab of KGMU on 23rd march just one day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced nationwide lockdown from 24th March. Only Screening facility was available regarding covid disease in Banaras Hindu University BHU.
- Under the supervision of Chief Minister Yogi within 2 weeks, covid testing of more than 5000 samples daily was started in SGPGI Lucknow Meerut medical College Saifai rural medical sciences institute, medical colleges of Gorakhpur and Jhansi and 3 other hospitals.
- Presently a total of 390 testing labs are working for the testing of covid infection in Uttar Pradesh. Out of these 258 are Government owned and 132 are private sector. UP has conducted more than 6 crore covid tests which is very high compared to the tests conducted in any other state in the country.
- All labs in Uttar Pradesh were established after recommendation of ICMR. Special attention is being paid for database management and quality of the covid tests. King George medical University Lucknow is doing quality control of all covid labs.

COVID-19 - □ + ☑
STERILE

- Medical health department along with KGMU has prepared software in which every covid lab uploads the results of their sample on covid portal. This portal is now connected to the website of Indian council for medical Research ICMR.
- An external quality assurance program has been prepared for the training of covid testing. With the help of this program, more than 1000 doctors, para medical staff and sanitation workers in stare have been provided online training for the protocol of covid testing.
- With inauguration of new BSL-2 Labs in 11 more districts, as many as 45 districts have been equipped with Testing Facilities. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed to complete the procedure of establishing the same kind of laboratories in the remaining 30 districts of the state within the next 3 or 4 months.
- For the intense study and testing of corona virus the facility of genome sequencing is being increased in state. The process of genome sequencing is being augmented with the help of BHU Varanasi, KGMU Lucknow, CDRI and IGIB Delhi. This will help in management of prevention from delta plus variant.

# CHIEF MINISTER YOGI BECAME SUPPORT OF COVID ORPHANED CHILDREN

The Yogi government has started working on implementation of Mukhymantri  Bal seva Yojana at ground level after it was approved by the cabinet. The scheme is meant for the children who lost either both their parents or one of them in covid period which will be counted from March 2020. Responsibility has been fixed of the officials who will implement this scheme to the ground level in the districts and do listing of children and terms of eligibility. The motto of the scheme is to provide immediate help to the children in distress and save them from going into the wrong hands. The scheme takes complete care of the health, education and maintenance of the children. District level task force will identify the legal guardian of the beneficiary and the district level child care unit and child welfare committee will also keep an eye over the overall development of the children. Only original bonafide citizens of Uttar Pradesh will get the benefit of this scheme. All children whether they are biological or adopted, of any single family can take the benefit (Maintenance allowance of Rs.4000 per month) of the scheme. The categories of the children who will get the benefit of the Mukhymantri  Bal Seva Yojana has been decided. The scheme will be available for those children aged up to 18 years whose both mother and father have died in the pandemic or those children whose mother or father had died before 1 March 2020 and the other remaining parent mother or father died in covid period or those children whose both parents had died before 1 March 2020 and the legal guardian died during covid period. Those children will also get the benefit of the scheme who are aged up to 18 years and one of their parents whether mother or father died during covid period and the person who died was the main earner of the family and the other parent which is currently alive but his or her earnings along with the total income of the family is not more than 2 lakh rupees form year.

## PICU/NICU WILL SAVE FROM THE THIRD WAVE OF CORONA

Gorakhpur Medical College

Experts are saying that the impending third wave of covid be more sensitive towards children. Keeping in mind these apprehensions the government under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has started preparations on war footing to save children from any such kind of impending wave. Just after reaching at the helm of affairs in March 2017, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath started his efforts on war footing to stop the untimely death of children from encephalitis. Infrastructure of health services were strengthened at PHC primary health centers and CHC community health centers keeping in mind the encephalitis disease. Special awareness campaign regarding cleanliness and hygiene was launched in three dozen sensitive districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh for containment of the disease. The result is that encephalitis is almost on the verge of ending in these districts. Now the experience gained during the elimination of encephalitis is being used by the Yogi Government to save the children from Corona. The pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) / Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) project, which played an important role during control of encephalitis is now implemented across the state to save the children from covid. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed to prepare 100 bedded ICU for children in all medical colleges of state. The Chief Minister has asked to set up 100 bedded ICU at every division level and 25 bedded ICU at district hospitals. Along with it directions have been given to officers for arrangement of necessary and skilled human resources in a certain time period. The doctors of Baba Raghav Das medical College Gorakhpur and King George medical University Lucknow who have an experience of four decades in saving the children from deadly disease encephalitis will impart training to other doctors and paramedical staff of the state for operating the PICU. It should be kept in mind that more than 95% decrease has been registered in the deaths of children from encephalitis, which was taking lives of children in around 3 dozen districts of states especially in all districts of Gorakhpur and basti division from the last four decades.

## SUB HEALTH CENTERS WILL STRENGTHEN THE HEALTH FACILITIES

For providing quality health facilities swiftly to every person in view of the probable third wave of Corona, the Yogi Government has made a big announcement. After 18 divisions and 75 districts, the government is going to open 5,000 new sub health centers in 822 blocks of state in the month of July. The Uttar Pradesh government is making this big move to provide facilities to every person at block level. Sub health centers will be established in those areas of state where there is no community health centre and primary health centre. Any patient will get immediate treatment at these sub health centers. Serious Patients will also get all the facilities to conduct necessary tests at these centers. 20812 sub health centers are already running in Uttar Pradesh and from July month 5,000 new sub health centers will be established. The Yogi government has set the target to increase the number of these centers in the state to 32 thousand. After the opening of 5,000 new sub health centers the number of these centers in the state will reach 25812. With the expansion of these health centers people will get better medical facilities easily. Directions have been issued to strengthen all the arrangements at community health centres and primary health centers in all districts of state so that people can get better health facilities. Emphasis is being given on availability of high tech medical equipment in 3022 primary health centers, 855 community health centers and 592 urban primary health centers. The work is on fast track for maintenance of equipment, activities, cleanliness, availability of manpower and painting of the premises. Responsibility of its continuous monitoring has been given to officers.

## SUCCESS IN NEUTRALIZING THE THIRD WAVE OF COVID

### LIFE SUPPORT AMBULANCE

Teams comprising more than 23 thousand Emergency medical technicians and pilots are working 24/7 in 108, 102 and advanced life support ambulances to fight with the probable third wave of Corona National mobile unit170 National mobile medical units working in 53 districts of state have been alerted. A senior doctor along with a pharmacist, one lab technician and a staff nurse always remain available in this unit.

### OXYGEN PLANT

Before the covid pandemic there were 25 oxygen plants in the state. Now the number has been increased to 541. Out of these 162 plants are ready now and the availability currently is of 1000 metric ton oxygen which is way ahead of the demand in the state.

### HEALTH ATM

Health ATMs will be established in villages, small towns and urban areas in order to provide better health facilities to the citizens of the state. In these ATM's health of the people will be tested on different parameters with the help of high tech machines.

### GOLDEN CARD

Golden cards will be made available to all antyodaya card holders under Ayushman Bharat scheme. Treatment of kidney transplant, corneal transplant and mucormycosis black fungus will be included in the package under the scheme.

### CLEAN DRINKING WATER

To provide clean drinking water to the citizens of the state Yogi government has repaired 629 water palms out of 11589 water pumps in all municipal corporations. While 71 hand pumps out of 428 have been rebored and made functional.

### FOCUS ON NUTRITION

For improvement of the health of malnourished children under the age of five in the state, a special campaign is being launched from 1st July to 30th September by the department of integrated child development services ICDS. This initiative is being taken to eliminate malnourishment in children and mothers.

### DISASTER EXPERTS

The Yogi government has decided to appoint disaster experts on contract basis in 62 districts of state to deal with any kind of disaster. They will get a remuneration of 50 thousand rupees per month. All those experts who were working in 13 districts of state have been given an extension of one year service.

# U.P. IS BECOMING EXPRESS PRADESH

August month of year 2021 will usher in new era of development in Uttar Pradesh when country's longest Puravanchal expressway will be inaugurated. It has been decided to inaugurate this expressway in August which is being constructed by UPEIDA, Uttar Pradesh industrial expressways development authority under the directions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Purvanchal expressway will give impetus to development in eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh. The 341 km long six lane (expendable to 8 lane) Poorvanchal expressway from Haidariya in Ghazipur to Chand Sarai in Lucknow has been constructed by Yogi Adityanath for the development of eastern part of state and to connect the state capital Lucknow with the cities like Sultanpur, Ambedkar Nagar, Amethi, Ayodhya and economically backward districts like Azamgarh, Mau and Ghazipur. The Purvanchal expressway starts from village Chand Sarai in district Lucknow which is on Lucknow Sultanpur road (NH 731) and ends at 18 km before UP-Bihar border at it National Highway number 31. It will benefit districts like Lucknow Barabanki Amethi Ayodhya Sultanpur Ambedkar Nagar Azamgarh Mau and Ghazipur. With the development of this expressway the eastern region of the state would not only be connected to the state Capital but also further to the national capital through easy and smooth corridor of Agra Lucknow expressway and Yamuna expressway. Prime Minister Narendra Modi started the Purvanchal expressway project from Azamgarh on 14 July 2018.

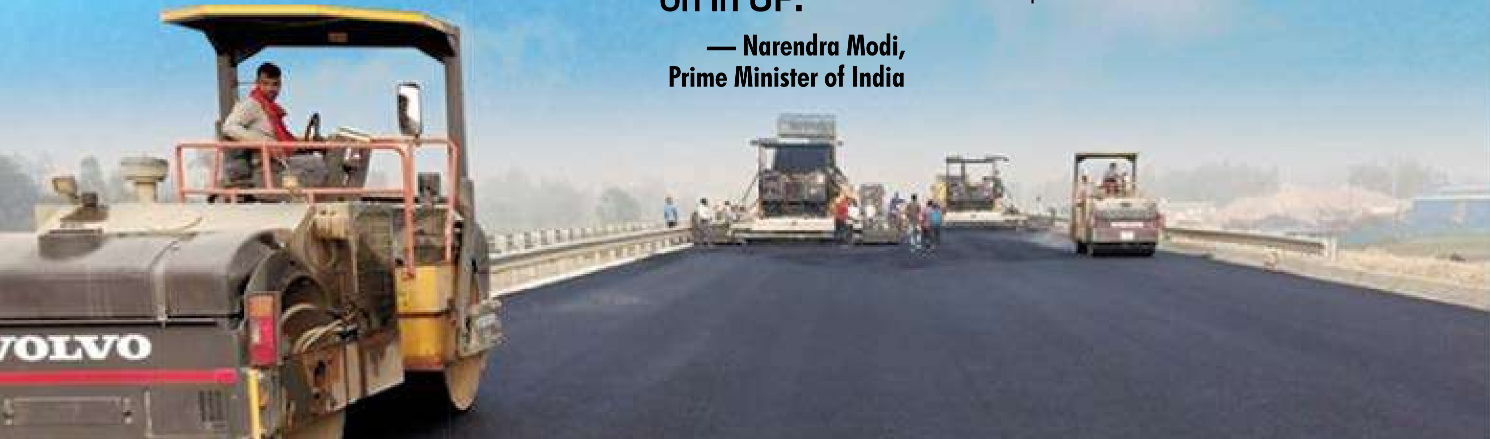
> “Today Identity of Uttar Pradesh is getting stronger as express Pradesh. Work on 5 mega projects of connectivity worth thousands crore rupees is going on in UP.”
>
> **— Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India**

## AN EXPRESSWAY WITH MANY SPECIALITIES

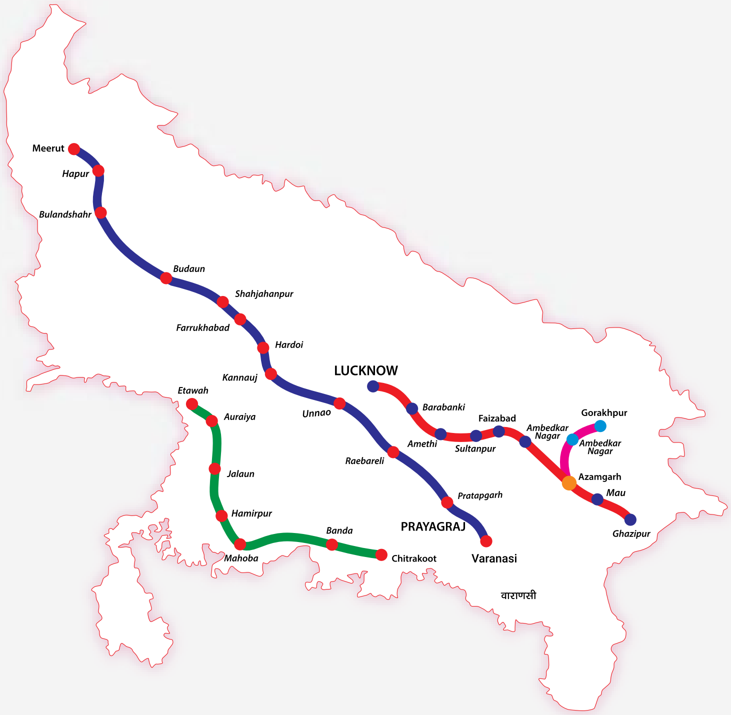
The Purvanchal expressway has many special features. Instead of stones being laid on either side of the road Purvanchal expressway has honeycomb shaped geocells on both sides of road. To strengthen the quality of roads crumb rubber modified bitumen was used instead of ordinary bitumen in this expressway. To prevent the accidents crush barriers have been installed on both sides of the median on this expressway.

## EXPRESSWAY PARALLEL TO GANGA

The process of land purchase has been started from January 21 for Ganga expressway for 594 km long Ganga expressway which is longer even then the Purvanchal expressway. The cabinet under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath approved the Ganga expressway project on 24th November 2020. Yogi government has set the target to lay the foundation stone of Ganga expressway in June. This expressway will pave way for smooth travel from Haridwar to Varanasi through prayagraj on parallel to river Ganga which will attract development.



# EXPRESSWAY NETWORKIS SPREADING IN UTTAR PRADESH



🟥 **PURVANCHAL EXPRESSWAY**
🟩 **BUNDELKHAND EXPRESSWAY**
🟪 **GORAKHPUR LINK EXPRESSWAY**
🟦 **GANGA EXPRESSWAY**

# BETTER CONNECTIVITY FOR BETTER FUTURE

## FOUR LANE ROAD

**19 km long four lane bypass will be constructed with an amount of 200 crore rupees in Saharanpur. Yogi cabinet has approved construction of 7.2 km long four lane road from Yamuna expressway to Vrindavan.**

## GAURAV PATH

**Construction of 133 roads to the houses of brilliant students and repair and development of old roads and naming them Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Gaurav path. Road construction on the name of players who have made the country proud.**

## BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

**In Uttar Pradesh 102 big bridges, 41 rail over bridges and 264 small bridges have been constructed in last four and half years. Construction work is in progress on 91 railway over bridges and 629 small bridges out of which the approach road to 264 small bridges is complete.**

## AIR CONNECTIVITY

**First time civil aviation promotion policy 2017 has been implemented in state. Under it permission has been granted for Air services on 18 new routes in Uttar Pradesh for better air connectivity between state capital Lucknow and other big cities.**

## AIRPORT

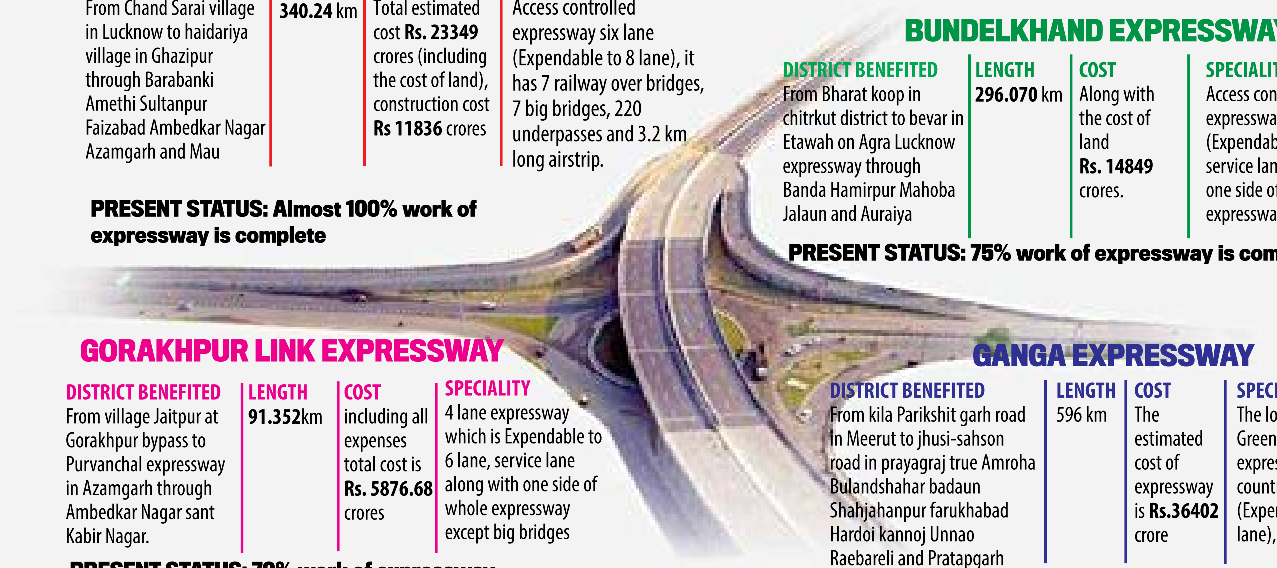
**Uttar Pradesh will have maximum number of five international airports in the country. Permission for international flights on the third Kushinagar airport of Uttar Pradesh has been granted. International flights will start from Ayodhya till 2022 and from jevar till 2024.**

## ROAD CONSTRUCTION

**In the Yogi government 14935 km long new roads have been constructed till date while expansion and repair work was done on 14160 km along roads. 339698 km long roads in state have been made potholes free.**

## METRO SERVICES

**Construction work underway on 32.4 km long corridor of Kanpur metro rail project worth 11076 crore rupees. Metro construction work with an estimated cost of 3380 crore rupees in Agra has started. Work of Metro Rail project started in 10 metro cities**



## PURVANCHAL EXPRESSWAY

| DISTRICTS BENEFITED | LENGTH | COST | SPECIALITY |
|---|---|---|---|
| From Chand Sarai village in Lucknow to haidariya village in Ghazipur through Barabanki Amethi Sultanpur Faizabad Ambedkar Nagar Azamgarh and Mau | **340.24** km | Total estimated cost **Rs. 23349** crores (including the cost of land), construction cost **Rs 11836** crores | Access controlled expressway six lane (Expendable to 8 lane), it has 7 railway over bridges, 7 big bridges, 220 underpasses and 3.2 km long airstrip. |

**PRESENT STATUS: Almost 100% work of expressway is complete**

## BUNDELKHAND EXPRESSWAY

| DISTRICT BENEFITED | LENGTH | COST | SPECIALITY |
|---|---|---|---|
| From Bharat koop in chitrkut district to bevar in Etawah on Agra Lucknow expressway through Banda Hamirpur Mahoba Jalaun and Auraiya | **296.070** km | Along with the cost of land **Rs. 14849** crores. | Access controlled expressway 4 lane (Expendable to 6 lane), service lane along with one side of whole expressway |

**PRESENT STATUS: 75% work of expressway is complete.**

## GORAKHPUR LINK EXPRESSWAY

| DISTRICT BENEFITED | LENGTH | COST | SPECIALITY |
|---|---|---|---|
| From village Jaitpur at Gorakhpur bypass to Purvanchal expressway in Azamgarh through Ambedkar Nagar sant Kabir Nagar. | **91.352**km | including all expenses total cost is **Rs. 5876.68** crores | 4 lane expressway which is Expendable to 6 lane, service lane along with one side of whole expressway except big bridges |

**PRESENT STATUS: 70% work of expressway construction is complete.**

## GANGA EXPRESSWAY

| DISTRICT BENEFITED | LENGTH | COST | SPECIALLITY |
|---|---|---|---|
| From kila Parikshit garh road In Meerut to jhusi-sahson road in prayagraj true Amroha Bulandshahar badaun Shahjahanpur farukhabad Hardoi kannoj Unnao Raebareli and Pratapgarh | 596 km | The estimated cost of expressway is **Rs.36402** crore | The longest Greenfield expressway of country. six lane (Expendable to 8 lane), |

**PRESENT STATUS: Process of land purchase for the project continue**

# YOGI GOVERNMENT SETTING EXAMPLE OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Any region or society can only develop when half of its population not only feels safe but also gets the respect which it deserves. With the same intention, just after assuming power in March 2017 Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath started his sincere efforts for the security of women and daughters of state and to make them independent. Just after becoming CM of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath launched the campaign to stop the crime against women. It began with the formation of the Anti Romeo squad and Mission Shakti added new dimensions to women empowerment. By providing economic help in marriage of daughters of poor families, triple talaq victims along with rehabilitation for destitute Hindu women, Yogi Adityanath has made it clear how sensitive his government is for women

## COMMITTED FOR DIGNITY OF WOMEN

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is committed for the safety, dignity and for the self dependence of women and daughters of state. Government has taken many steps for the upliftment, and empowerment of women and daughters and to connect them with the mainstream of employment. Two major schemes Mukhymantri Mahila Samarthya Yojana and Mukhymantri Saksham Suposhan Yojana have been launched by the Yogi Adityanath government to augment the empowerment of Women and daughters for Atmnirbhar or Self reliant Uttar Pradesh. Women entrepreneurs will be directly benefited from the Mukhymantri Mahila Samarthya Yojana which has been started with an aim to make the women of state independent. The aim of this scheme is to make the women of state capable and self reliant. To uplift their lifestyle this scheme also aims to motivate women for employment through cottage and small industries which are based on local resources. It also aims to provide a market for such products. Currently more than 90 lakh micro small and medium level units are functional in the state, out of which more than 90% are functioning as very small and cottage industries. Women entrepreneurs play an important role in the small scale and cottage industries. Mukhymantri mahila Samarth scheme will give new flight and direction to these women based industries. For implementation of this new scheme 200 crore rupees have been allocated in the budget.

## PAVED WAY FOR SELF RELIANCE OF WOMEN

Started by the Yogi Government with the motto to make half of the population self-reliant, the BC sakhi scheme has started giving benefits to women in rural areas. Under the scheme which is unique in the country, 58758 rural women of 75 districts are being trained as banking correspondent BC. Under this flagship scheme of the Yogi Government, women groups were given a better opportunity of employment by appointing as banking correspondent Sakhi I.e. BC sakhi.

From January this year training programme of rural women has started in all 75 districts of state. In every district group of 30 women have formed and they are getting training. This training is being imparted by rural self employment institute. The woman getting training under the BC Sakhi scheme in the state are taking the charge at ground level in villages.

## WOMEN POWER IN PANCHAYATS

The women empowerment programs launched by State Government Resulted in the increased hold of women in panchayats. Now women have given responsibility from village Pradhan to district panchayat chief. Because of the changed environment this time 31212 women won elections on the post of Gram Pradhan while 447 on Block chief and 42 won on District Panchayat Chief post. This is an excellent initiative to strengthen the village democracy and harmony. This must be kept in mind that there is one third reservation for women in panchayats in state but now their presence exceeded their reserved quota at all small and big posts. This is the first time in the history of Uttar Pradesh that such a big number of women have got victory in the panchayat elections.

## EMPLOYMENT DURING LOCK DOWN

Last April when a feeling of insecurity was everywhere due to the global pandemic covid-19, Yogi government

started giving training to women to become independent by stitching masks under Uttar Pradesh state rural livelihood mission. In this fight, the stitching machines, clothes, needle and thread became the weapons of 400 women of sisai village in Sadar block of Balrampur district who formed a group and took training from livelihood mission. Within three months these women made a profit of 2387376 rupees by stitching 132632 masks. Self-help groups have played an important role in making lakhs of women self-reliant during the Corona pandemic. Around 4.2 to lakh women self help groups have benefited almost 45 lakh families in the state. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has also encouraged Uttar Pradesh state livelihood mission for strengthening the rural economy. Chief minister has online transferred an amount of 445.92 crore rupees to 97663 self help groups and their associate organizations under the mission. This huge amount has changed the lifestyle of lakhs of women and their families who are associated with their self help groups. Under the state rural livelihood mission employment was provided to 880500 rural women during the Corona pandemic.

## DESTITUTE WOMEN GOING BACK TO THEIR HOMES

While on one hand Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is raising voice of women and children under mission Shakti, on the other hand he is expanding the new schemes by adding more facilities for the overall development of women and children of state.The Yogi government which is working continuously in the area of children rights and their health and education is same time expanding the facilities for destitute women and constructing new children's shelter homes along with making arrangements to provide digital education there. Destitute children in the state are getting benefits of the welfare scheme, foster care and sponsorship. State government is working rapidly for providing facilities to the destitute children under 'Integrated Child Protection Scheme' and also making them aware about their rights. In the previous year 961 destitute children were sent back to their homes while 2822 destitute women have been sent to their homes after following the legal procedure.

मिशन शक्ति

नारी सुरक्षा
नारी सम्मान
नारी स्वावलंबन

## EMPOWERMENT TO WOMEN, MISSION OF YOGI GOVERNMENT

- Government jobs to more than 1 lakh women in Yogi Government. More than 2 lakh women beneficiaries under PM swanidhi scheme which is highest in the country.
- Distribution of rural housing documents to more than 2 Lakh people till date under Swamitva Yojana (Gharaoni) started by Yogi Government. The Gharauni is issued in the name of women members of the family.
- Marriage of 1 lakh 52 thousand girls under Mukhymantri Samuhik Vivah Yojana. Financial assistance has been increased from 35 thousand rupees to 50 thousand rupees.
- Free of cost gas connections distributed to more than 1 crore 47 lakh poor women under Pradhanmantri Ujjwala Yojna, which is highest in the country.
- Abolished age limitation under Destitute women pension, 28 lakh destitute women got 500 rupees per month pension while vidhwa pension given to more than 21 lakh women.
- Shabri Sankalp abhiyan is running in 39 districts. arrangement of fortified food material for 3 to 5 years children. decrease of 2% in malnutrition
- One stop centre established in all districts for victims of domestic violence. Till date 104859 women got help from the centres.
- Financial assistance of 75 thousand rupees for marriage of maximum two girl children of Registered construction labourers. Till now 28951 beneficiaries.
- Provision of rights on the land under Revenue code for granddaughter, daughter of real brother and daughter of real sister also
- 7.30 crore women were made aware under Mission Shakti Campaign which is for making women self-reliant and aware. Women help desk on all 1535 police stations.
- Godbharai and Annaprashan programs at anganbadi centres are being organised. Till now 970065 programs have been organised. State has 189789 approved anganbadi centres.
- Formation of more than 10 lakh women self help groups and association of more than 1 crore women with it. Participation in making of school dresses to distribution of ration.

निष्पक्ष एवं पारदर्शी भर्ती
प्रक्रिया के अंतर्गत
उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस भर्ती एवं प्रोन्नति बोर्ड द्वारा
5,805 अभ्यर्थियों
को
नियुक्ति-पत्र वितरण
आदित्यनाथ

# EVERY GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENT BECAME EXAMPLE OF TRANSPARENCY IN YOGI GOVERNMENT

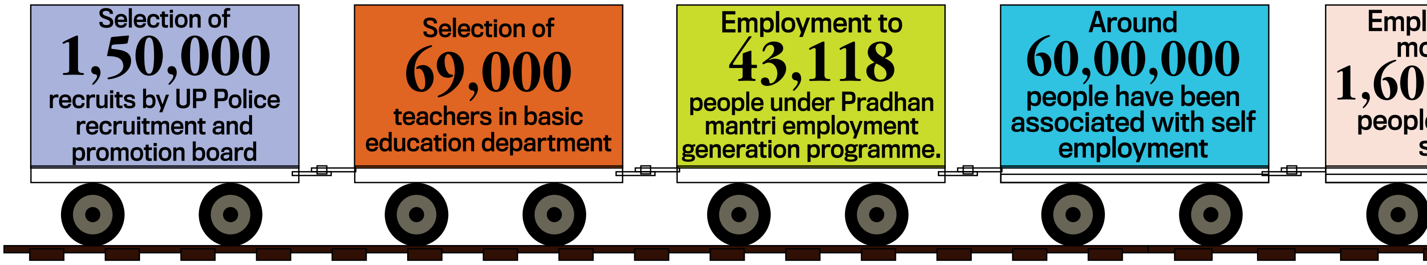
Under strict supervision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath every appointment to government posts in Uttar Pradesh has become an example of honesty, transparency and flawlessness. Before 2017, it was the same state where the recruitment process was infamous for corruption, nepotism and bribing to the 'family giants'. On the other hand now no finger can be raised on the appointments on more than 4.25 lakh posts. This is the new work culture of the new Uttar Pradesh of new India. In the Yogi Government there is no space for corruption and the talent gets its due respect. It was not easy to complete the recruitment of more than 1.5 lakh employees alone in the police department where some people are only involved in blocking the recruitment process. Apart from the government sector private investment also provided self reliance to the youth. The Yogi government completed the much-awaited citizen's wish of 'rule of law'. A practical change is being seen in every sector of state in these 4 years. Youths were selected for more than 4.25 lakh government Posts with complete honesty and flawlessness. The Yogi government not only selected the candidates for jobs in a transparent manner but also encouraged employees by making the procedure of promotion time bound.

## CHANGING FACE OF PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

The provincial civil service exam of Uttar Pradesh public service commission is the most important exam of the state. The commission announced the final result of PCS 2018 exam on 11th September. This exam was special in many ways. After a Long time selections were made on 119 posts of sub divisional magistrate and 94 posts of deputy SP through this exam. First time in the last 10 years, selection in such a big number was done on these SDM and deputy SP posts. Another important thing was that the commission conducted this exam during the lockdown due to covid infection. When Yogi Adityanath became the Chief Minister one of the biggest challenges in front of him was to bring the examinations of UPPSC back on the track which was then infamous for anomalies in recruitment process during opposition rule. The Chief Minister started his efforts and now the commission announces its examination calendar in the very starting of the year to avoid any kind of anomaly.

## EXAMINATION COMPLETED IN RECORD 4 DAYS

The Commission implemented the rule of conducting the main examination of PCS 2018 on the lines of the union public service commission. First time the PCS mains exam of UPPSC was conducted only in 4 days between 18th and 22nd October 2019. Earlier it used to take 18 to 20 days. In the changed pattern the alternate subject in the main examination was reduced from 2 to 1. Earlier there were two papers of general knowledge which were increased to 4 this time. The objective exam of general studies became subjective in the main examination of PCS 2018. Earlier there were allegations of giving marks in abundance in PCS examinations. So to decrease the importance of interview in PCS exam commission reduced the total number from 200 to 100 and this increased transparency in the

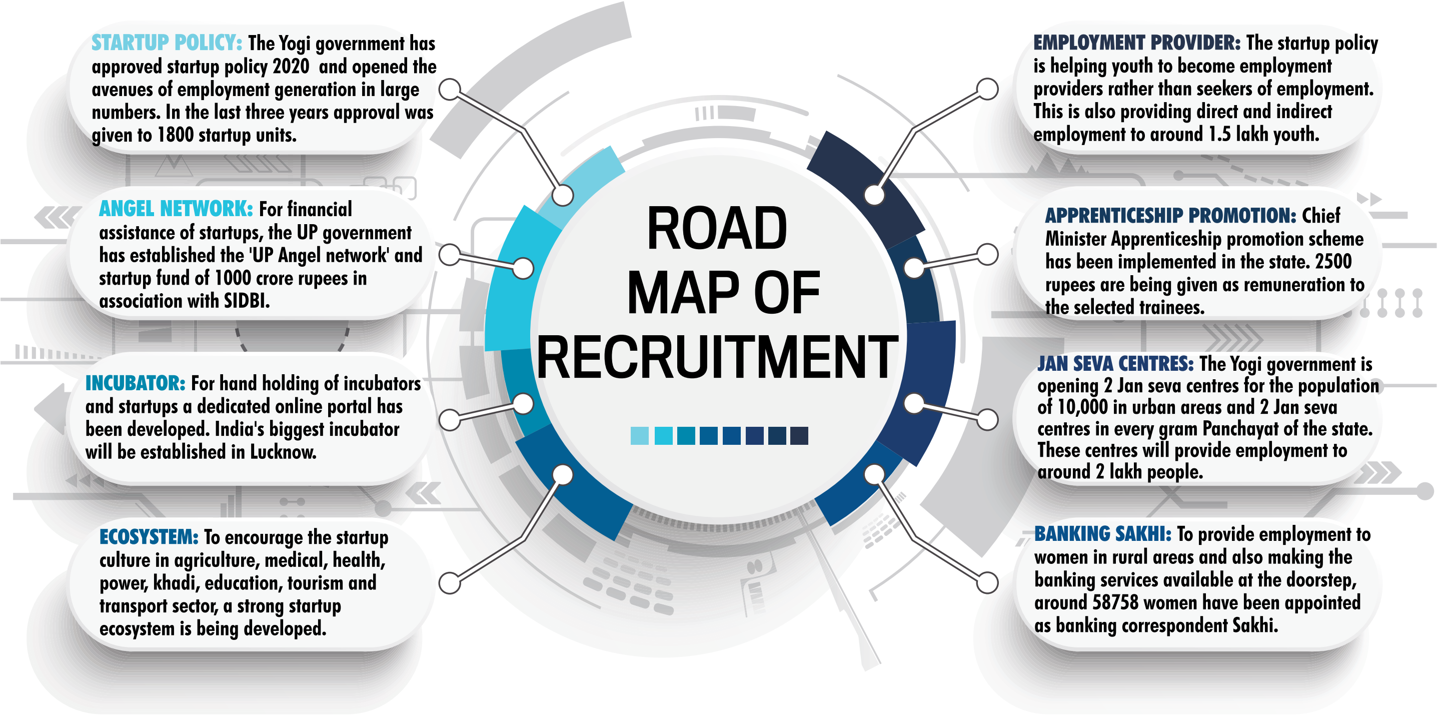

Selection of **1,50,000** recruits by UP Police recruitment and promotion board

Selection of **69,000** teachers in basic education department

Employment to **43,118** people under Pradhan mantri employment generation programme.

Around **60,00,000** people have been associated with self employment

Empl mo **1,60** peopl s



# ROAD MAP OF RECRUITMENT

**STARTUP POLICY:** The Yogi government has approved startup policy 2020 and opened the avenues of employment generation in large numbers. In the last three years approval was given to 1800 startup units.

**ANGEL NETWORK:** For financial assistance of startups, the UP government has established the 'UP Angel network' and startup fund of 1000 crore rupees in association with SIDBI.

**INCUBATOR:** For hand holding of incubators and startups a dedicated online portal has been developed. India's biggest incubator will be established in Lucknow.

**ECOSYSTEM:** To encourage the startup culture in agriculture, medical, health, power, khadi, education, tourism and transport sector, a strong startup ecosystem is being developed.

**EMPLOYMENT PROVIDER:** The startup policy is helping youth to become employment providers rather than seekers of employment. This is also providing direct and indirect employment to around 1.5 lakh youth.

**APPRENTICESHIP PROMOTION:** Chief Minister Apprenticeship promotion scheme has been implemented in the state. 2500 rupees are being given as remuneration to the selected trainees.

**JAN SEVA CENTRES:** The Yogi government is opening 2 Jan seva centres for the population of 10,000 in urban areas and 2 Jan seva centres in every gram Panchayat of the state. These centres will provide employment to around 2 lakh people.

**BANKING SAKHI:** To provide employment to women in rural areas and also making the banking services available at the doorstep, around 58758 women have been appointed as banking correspondent Sakhi.

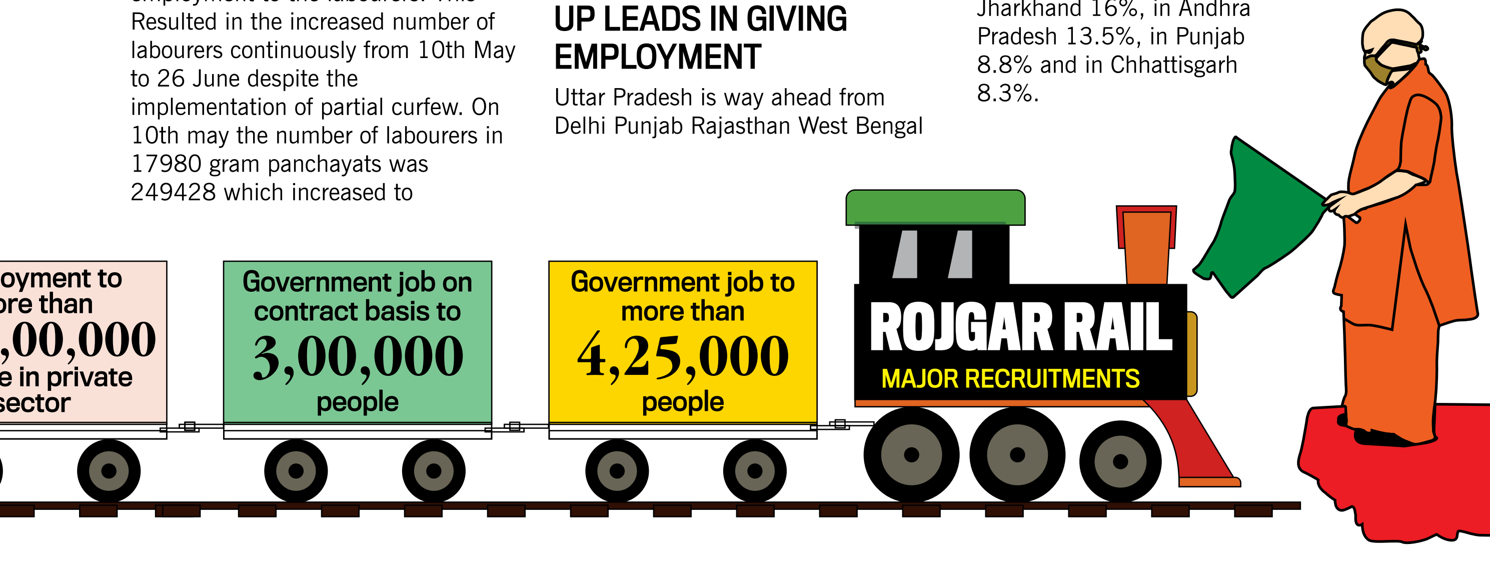
selection procedure.

## RECORD NUMBER OF EMPLOYMENT TO MIGRANT WORKERS

Chief Minister Yogi ordered for skill mapping of the migrant workers who were coming from other states after announcement of lockdown. Along with it he also directed to increase the working days in MGNREGA to provide employment to the labourers. This Resulted in the increased number of labourers continuously from 10th May to 26 June despite the implementation of partial curfew. On 10th may the number of labourers in 17980 gram panchayats was 249428 which increased to 1345151 in 53099 gram panchayats on 5th June. After that it further increased to 1408615 in 52818 gram panchayats on 6th June. During this period more than 2 crore employment days were generated against which 448 crore rupees were given as payment to 11 lakh 60 thousand labourers. During covid period MGNREGA provides employment to 50 to 60 thousand people on an average.

## UP LEADS IN GIVING EMPLOYMENT

Uttar Pradesh is way ahead from Delhi Punjab Rajasthan West Bengal Kerala and Tamilnadu in terms of providing employment. As per the centre and monitoring Indian economy the unemployment rate in Uttar Pradesh is 6.9. this is 3 times less in comparison of March 2017. According to the report the unemployment rate in Delhi is 45.6 %, in Rajasthan it is 27.6%, in Kerala 23.5%, in West Bengal 19.3 percent, in Tamilnadu 28%, in Jharkhand 16%, in Andhra Pradesh 13.5%, in Punjab 8.8% and in Chhattisgarh 8.3%.



In comparison to 2016 the number of cases of dacoity in 2020 reduced by 67.69%, cases of loot by 66%, murder by 25.70 percent, riot by 29.75%, road hold up 100%, extortion by kidnapping 41.51% and rape cases by 32.24%

# PUBLIC GOT THE SECURITY SHIELD OF YOGI ADITYANATH GOVERNMENT

After becoming the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh in March 2017 Yogi Adityanath started efforts for improvement in the law and order of the state. CM Yogi started appointing additional director general rank officers in zones and inspector general rank officers in ranges. Along with it, after receiving good results by implementing a police commissioner system in **Noida** and **Lucknow** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath implemented a police commissioner system in **Varanasi** and **Kanpur** also and gave the message of strict action against criminals. Just after becoming Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that criminals will either leave Uttar Pradesh or leave crime. After that Uttar Pradesh Police started a campaign to nabb the criminals. List of dreaded criminals was prepared in every district and a special police team was formed to catch them. In the last four and half years 137 criminals were killed during encounters while 2782 criminals got injured, 36990 accused were arrested under gangster act and 523 accused were booked under national security act. In these operations 13 police personnel also laid down their lives. It is the result of strict action against criminals by the police that in the last 4 and half years 11000 wanted criminals have been arrested.

## CRIMINAL'S PROPERTY ATTACHED

The Yogi government has hit hard on the economic front of criminals by attaching their properties. That is why criminals now fear the law. Between January 2020 to May 2021 UP police has taken continuous actions against 25 Mafia and 8 dreaded criminals and has either attached their property worth more than 1128 crores or demolished their illegal construction. From January 2020 to April 2021 around 5558 cases have been lodged and action was taken against 22259 criminals. The Yogi government also took the historic decision to recover the penalty for damage of government property from those persons who damaged the government property during agitations against CAA. Along with the action on criminal Chief Minister Yogi has also given orders to officers to provide required security to the witnesses. After directions from the Chief Minister, the home department issued an order to all police officers to strictly implement the 'Sakshi Suraksha Yojana 2018'. Home department is reviewing this scheme every month.

## FORMATION OF SPECIAL SECURITY FORCE

For the security of major institutions of state along with metro stations, district courts and high courts Yogi Government has formed Uttar Pradesh special security force (UPSSF). Apart from it, a special police operation team (SPOT) has also been constituted for curbing the terrorist activities in the state. Modus operandi bureau has been formed to understand the mindset of criminals involved in serious crimes like murder loot dacoity and also to find the ways to prevent such criminal activities. The supervision work of this bureau has been given to adg technical services. SP state crime records bureau is its in-charge. To save the information regarding the criminals and provide this information to every officer, 'Trinetra app' has been developed which is connected with centralised online criminal database.

## FORMATION OF NEW POLICE STATIONS

Policing facilities have increased exponentially in the four and half years tenure of the yogi government and common people are getting its benefit. FIR counters have been formed in the superintendent of police offices in every district. Keeping in mind the welfare of police personnel, recruitment of more than 1 lakh 37 thousand police personnel and promotion of 32861 non gazetted police personnel was done by the government. Cyber cells have been formed in every district to deal with the cyber crime. Apart from that, work is continuing on construction of 18 forensic labs for micro investigation of crime. The regional forensic labs are functional in Varanasi Agra and Moradabad and their building was also there. Along with it in the last four and half years different kinds of 213 police stations have been constructed. Out of which 75 are power stations 5 are women special stations 10 are vigilance stations, 4 are economic offences investigation and 40 anti human trafficking units have also been given the status of police station. Forensic University is being established in Uttar Pradesh for the first time.

## HI-TECH SUPERVISION OF JAILS

For the supervision of prisoners a video wall with 12 TV screens has been constructed on a wall in the command centre at the jail headquarter in Lucknow. This video wall has been further turned into 48 screens. All jails of Uttar Pradesh are now online. A total of 2750 cameras are installed in different jails of the state. It includes fixed as well as Pan, tilt, zoom cameras. The live feed of cameras comes directly on the video wall at the command centre. The cameras have been installed in such a manner that nobody can break them. In spite of that, if somebody tries to harm these cameras, an alert will reach the control room. Unique software has been developed with the help of Artificial intelligence and video analytics which recognises any unwanted activity if it gets captured in the video and raises the alarm. The jailor can see all kinds of activities going on in his jail through his mobile phone. A video wall has been made in every jail so that the jail officers can keep an eye over every prisoner.

# STEPS FOR SECURITY OF WOMEN

### RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

**To stop the incidences of forced religious conversions the Uttar Pradesh prohibition of unlawful religious conversion ordinance 2020 has been approved by the government. It has provision of strict action against people involved in forced conversions.**

### ANTI ROMEO SQUAD

**Anti Romeo squad has checked 98 lakh 55 thousand 867 people and after lodging 9948 cases took legal action against 14 thousand 958 persons and warned 41 lakh 21 thousand 745 people.**

### FAST TRACK COURT

**218 new fast track courts have been constituted for providing quick justice under posco act. To provide quick justice to women separate 81 magistrate level courts and 81 additional magistrate level courts are active. women help desks have been established in all 1535 police stations.**

### POSTERS OF CRIMINALS

**Directions have been issued to put posters of criminals on the intersections who have committed crime against women and children including misbehave, eve-teasing, harrasment and sexual offences. Provision has been made to give punishment through women police personnel to the criminals who have committed crime against women.**

### SAFE CITY

**Uttar Pradesh government has decided to make 13 cities including Lucknow Meerut Gorakhpur Varanasi Gautam Buddha Nagar as safe city for women. In all these cities petrollng is being done by women police personnel through four wheelers and two wheelers.**

### MISSION SHAKTI ABHIYAN

**After initiative of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath the women welfare department prepared the project of Mission Shakti ahwan campaign. Under this, an awareness campaign for women is being conducted under Mission Shakti shivir in villages.**

### NODAL OFFICER

**Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has deputed a female nodal officer of deputy SP rank in every district for quick disposal of complaints of women and to take strict action against culprits of crime against women.**

### POLICE RESPONSE VEHICLE

**If any woman who is alone on the road ans asks for security by calling on 112 service between 10 p.m. in evening to morning 6 a.m. then police make arrangements to drop her safely to her destination.**

योगी आदित्यनाथ
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश द्वारा
सूर्य प्रताप शाही

# YOGI GOVERNMENT STOOD UP TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF FARMERS

Development of the state cannot take place without making villages and farmers happy and prosperous. The Government of Yogi Adityanath is continuously making efforts keeping this statement in mind. The various schemes of the yogi government have not only increased the income of farmers but also strengthened the rural economy. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stood firmly with the farmers during lockdown in covid pandemic. Yogi ensured that farmers must not face any problem during this period. It not only increased the confidence of farmers in the policies of the yogi government but they also felt that their future was secured. How the efficient policies of Yogi Adityanath proved beneficial for farmers, can be seen in the government purchase of wheat and paddy. The Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's policy of transparent purchase of wheat and paddy and continuous supervision of purchase centres has been successful. Chief Minister Yogi once again stood up to the expectations of farmers. Uttar Pradesh became the first state in the country to achieve the target of paddy purchase two months before the set time. The Yogi government created a record by purchasing 60 lakh metric ton paddy against the target of 55 lakh metric ton. The Yogi government of Uttar Pradesh has purchased wheat from more than 12.88 lakh farmers during covid period which is highest in the history of the state. Because of the policies of the yogi government for farmers they are getting facilities as well as the price of their grain. UP started the wheat purchase in April and till now, the state government has purchased wheat from 12.88 lakh farmers. Till now around 56.25 Lakh metric ton wheat has been purchased from the farmers. Farmers have got direct benefit from the scheme of wheat purchase. Last year the government purchased around 35.76 lakh metric ton wheat in the same period.

## RECORD PAYMENT TO FARMERS

In the last 4 years Yogi Government has made a payment of around 32000 crore rupees to the paddy producers of the state. This is a record payment to the paddy farmers in the state. In the matter of payment to the wheat farmers, the Yogi Government has also left behind former governments. In the last four years the state government has made the payment of around 40099.83 crore rupees to more than 46.33 lakh wheat farmers. With the policy for the payment of each and every grain of the farmers yield, the state government has made the payment of 6663.32 crore rupees for purchase of 42.90 lakh metric ton paddy in the year 2017-18. In 2018-19 payment of 8449.39 crore rupees was made for purchase of 48.25 lakh metric ton and in year 2019-20 payment of 10274.25 crore rupees was made for a purchase of 56.47 lakh metric ton paddy. Yogi government also made arrangement for government procurement of mustard, Bengal gram and masoor on MSP under the the tilhan and dalhan category. Along with it, the government decided to make procurement from the door step of those farmers who were not able to reach the market to sell their yield.

## EFFORTS FOR INCREASING INCOME ARE SHOWING RESULTS

Immediately after becoming the chief minister of state Yogi Adityanath started his efforts to double the income of farmers. In his first step Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath fixed

> “The farmers of Uttar Pradesh will get the maximum benefit of Aatmnirbhar Bharat abhiyan. Now the food providers can sell their produce even outside of Mandi while they can fix the rate of yield at the time of sowing.”
>
> **— Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India**

the responsibility of 28 departments and prepared a detailed work plan. In this plan the efforts started to eliminate the shortcomings of the agriculture sector for the benefit of farmers. A program called the million farmers school was organised to provide updated technical information of farming to the farmers and to inform them about other challenges. This five day-long training program is organised in two sessions Rabi and kharif. These schools are organised on Panchayat bhawan, chaupal or any public place by trained workers and agriculture scientists. Around 60 to 100 farmers attend each school. Along with providing them updated information regarding activities like bee farming, fisheries, animal husbandry, marketing, sugarcane, horticulture, silk and agriculture the staff also answer their queries. More than 55 lakh farmers have got training from 'the million farmers school'. This initiative has increased the income of farmers.

## SUGARCANE AREA INCREASED

After reaching at the helm of affairs Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath started the campaign for timely payment of sugarcane farmers. Record payment of 1.4 lakh crore rupees of 45 lakh sugarcane farmers has been done by the Yogi Government in the last 4 years. First time Yogi Government ensured availability of loans on easy interest to sugar Mills for immediate payment of sugarcane farmers. For the welfare of sugarcane farmers, the government made the payment of 2916 crore rupees to 53 sugar mills and by making a provision of 4000 crores rupees loan for the purpose. The welfare policy of the Yogi Government regarding farmers resulted in the increase of sugarcane cultivation area in the state. In the sugar season 2020-21 the total sugarcane cultivation area was estimated at 27.16 lakh hectares while in the last season of 2019-20 it was 26.78 lakh hectares. So an increase of 1.4 % has been registered in the cultivation area of sugarcane.

# EVERY POSSIBLE HELP TO THE FOOD GROWER

### LOAN WAIVER

Loan waiver of small and marginal farmers with an amount of 36000 crore rupees. Distribution of 3 lakh 58 crore rupees Agriculture loan.

### SAMMAN NIDHI

Transfer of more than 32497 crore rupees in the accounts of 2.48 crore farmers under Pradhan mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana.

### INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE

The 1803 crore rupees subsidy amount due on agriculture investments was transferred into accounts of farmers. Distribution of more than 4 crore soil health cards.

### CROP INSURANCE

Around 2 crore 5 lakh farmers have been associated with Pradhan mantri fasal Bima Yojana. 2206 crore rupees as claim was transferred into accounts of more than 25.59 lakh farmers till date.

### MANDI FEE

First time 45 agro products in state became free of Mandi tax. Mandi fee was also reduced by 1%. The income of Mandi Parishad increased by 866 crore rupees..

### ASSISTANCE SCHEME

First time in state Kisan Accident Insurance Scheme for farmers and middlemen implemented

### MANDI PLACES

27 Mandis were upgraded and 220 new Mandi places were setup. Business of 6812 crore rupees through 125 Mandis in National agricultural market scheme.

### SAMRIDDHI AAYOG

First time formation of Uttar Pradesh Kisan Samman samridhi aayog. Provision of 500 crore rupees for Mukhymantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana.

### MODERNIZATION

Modernization and expansion of 20 sugar mills of the state along with reopening of pipraich, munderwa and ramala sugar mills.

### KHANDSARI UNITS

Free of cost licence renewal for refunctioning of already established khandsari units. Licence issued for 267 new khandsari units.

### E-NAM MANDI

Establishment of 291 E-NAM mandis in Uttar Pradesh and association of 18 lakh farmers and 34 thousand businessmen with them.

### KARMAN AWARD

Central government gave Krishi Karman puraskar of 2 crore rupees to the state government. In the last four years 2387.64 lakh metric ton agro production.

### ETHANOL PRODUCTION

With the efforts of the yogi government Uttar Pradesh became the state with highest production of ethanol which is around 126.10 crore litre annually. Total 50 distilleries are producing ethanol.

### FPO

To establish farmers as entrepreneurs and increase their income, The Uttar Pradesh krishak utpadak sangathan FPO policy 2020 has been implemented.

# CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIES IN YOGI GOVERNMENT

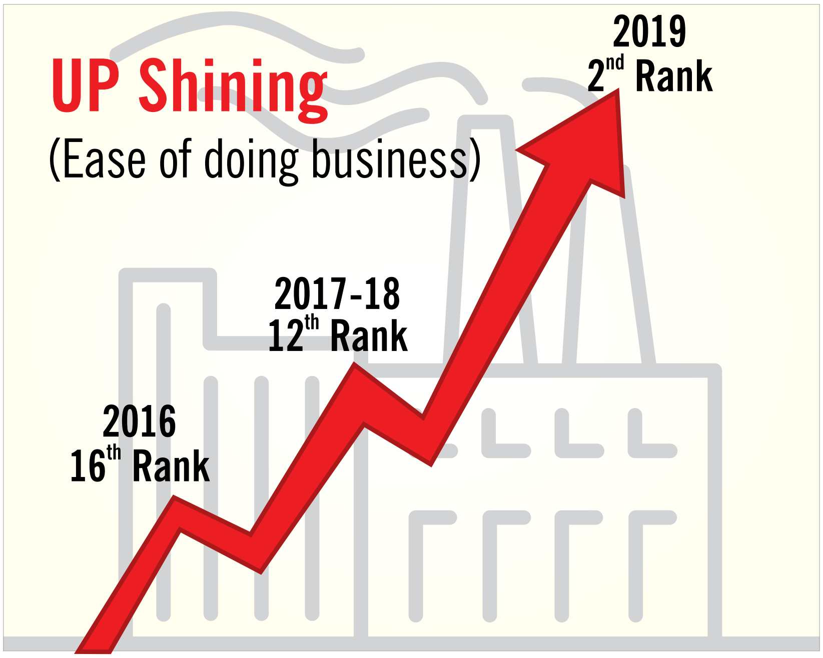
During the first and second wave of covid pandemic when economic activities were slow all over the word, at the same time in Uttar Pradesh the policies of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were attracting entrepreneurs. Help desk was formed to attract foreign investment during covid period. Foreign investors were contacted through their embassies. Proposals of investors were processed early through a single window system. So in this way, the ease of doing business environment created during the Yogi Government is attracting foreign investors. And the result is that in Uttar Pradesh local as well as foreign companies have shown interest in investment. As per the data of industrial development department in last one year 44 foreign investors have given their investment proposal worth 16732 crore rupees to the state government. The Yogi government is also working fastly at every level to materialise these investment proposals. State received 96 investment proposals of local and foreign investors worth 66000 crore rupees between March 2020 to May 2021. These include 40 foreign investor's proposals. Out of these proposals 22 investment proposals worth more than hundred crore rupees and will invest around 16732 crore rupees in the state. Government acted swiftly on these investment proposals and land has been made available for it. Very soon the construction work on these industries of foreign investors will start.

## COMPANIES STARTED COMING TO UP FROM CHINA

As per the officials of the industrial development department 7 Japanese companies, 2 companies from Canada, 4 from Germany, 1 from Hong Kong, 2 from Singapore, 3 from United Kingdom, 5 from the United States and 4 Korean companies are investing in the state. This includes famous companies like AiKa and Microsoft. Microsoft is making an investment of 1800 crore rupees in the establishment of a Software Park in the state. Maximum foreign companies who gave the proposal for investment want to to set up their units in Noida greater Noida, jewar and Agra. One shoe making company who returned from China has already started its production in Agra. This company is investing 300 crore rupees in Agra. Officials of the state are in touch with foreign investors for establishment of the investment proposals in Uttar Pradesh so that their problems, if any, can be solved. Once the production will start in these companies who have come forward for investment in the state , lakhs of people will get employment directly or indirectly.

## INVESTMENT IN SMALL DISTRICTS

The flow of foreign investment is not restricted only to big cities like Gautam Budh Nagar, Ghaziabad, Lucknow and Agra but small cities like Etah, Amroha, Mirzapur are also attracting foreign investment. According to the latest report of the Central government's department of promotion of industries and internal trade UP is among top 10 states in terms of foreign investment. Sectors like computer, hardware, service sector, software, telecommunication, mobile set manufacturing, and automobile manufacturing are attracting foreign investment in Uttar Pradesh. The Yogi government has made the arrangement of online MOU for the comfort of local and foreign



> “In which manner work on modern infrastructure is going on in Uttar Pradesh, investors from Country and across the world are excited to set up industries in the state”
>
> **— Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India**

investors. This will make the process of MoU easy and investors are also finding it comfortable to materialise their investment proposals. To connect the non resident Indians for direct investment in Uttar Pradesh UPNRI portal has been connected with Indian embassies in one and half dozen countries. This includes countries like America, Canada, Thailand , Ghana and Angola. The NRIs living in these countries, especially from Indian origin, are not only understanding the cultural heritage of Uttar Pradesh but also knowing the opportunity to invest in a changing Uttar Pradesh.

## EMPLOYMENT GENERATION FROM INDUSTRIES

922 big and small industrial units are being set up in 15 districts of Uttar Pradesh including Mathura, Chitrkut Unnao and Ghaziabad. These units will soon start functioning. In the covid period these industries have not only got the land early but many investors have started setting up their industries units also. This will provide employment to at least 50,000 people in the state. In Mathura, Pepsico is establishing a plant with an investment of 750 crore rupees. This company will provide employment to 1600 people from January next year. Investment of 400 crore rupees is taking place in Chitrakoot in the food processing sector. In the same way 17 big companies are making investments of 8625 crore rupees in different parts of the state. These include Bharat petroleum, Yara fertilizer, ITC Berger paints, UK paints, Neele Scot, forever distillery Godrej and Hindustan lever.

# GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ARE GIVING RESULTS

## INVEST UP

Invest UP has been formed under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for inviting investment. Online tracking portal has been launched to make the process easy and simple for monitoring of MOUs signed for setting up the industries.

## INVESTOR'S FRIENDLY POLICY

UP has adopted a new industry policy. 21 new investor friendly policies have been made. Launch of Nivesh Mitra portal which includes 227 services. With the help of the portal 97849 NOCs issued to entrepreneurs.

## INVESTOR SUMMIT

MoUs signed for investment of 4.68 lakh crore rupees in investor's summit. 371 projects worth almost 3 lakh crore rupees are functional. 5 lakh people got employment with it.

## DEFENCE CORRIDOR

Work started on Defence industrial manufacturing corridor. The target is to generate 5 lakh employment through investment of 50000 crore rupees. 14 MoUs signed for defence corridor. Investment of 11910 crore rupees till date.

## LICENCE APPROVAL

Arrangement of providing different licence approvals within 72 hours to new industries. The industry will not be inspected for 1000 days. Loans worth 42700 crore rupees were distributed to 12.91 lakh units under Aatmnirbhar Bharat package.

## LAND TO INDUSTRIES

Revenue code amendment ordinance 2020 has made it easy to change the use of land in case of agricultural land so that it can be used for industrial and commercial purposes. 50% off on electricity for 10 years for setting industries in backward areas.

## MANUFACTURING CLUSTER

3 electronics manufacturing clusters worth 40 thousand crore rupees are being set up in the state. It will generate employment for 4 lakh people. Samsung mobile unit already established in Noida.

## WEB OF STARTUPS

Country's biggest startup incubator will be established in Lucknow in front of Amausi airport. Overall 100 incubators will be established in the state. North India's first state data centre established in Noida with 6000 crore rupees.

# SMALL INDUSTRIES GIVING PACE TO DEVELOPMENT

For years, the businessmen associated with the leather industry of Taj Nagari Agra used to go to the laboratories of France-Germany or Chennai for quality check of their products. These outdoor labs not only took more time but this whole process was very expensive also. Country's hi tech testing lab has been established under Uttar Pradesh export infrastructure development scheme in singhana area, on Mathura highway, 21 km far from Agra. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated this lab on 7 August 2020 and with it the hassles of leather businessmen also ended. This new lab in Agra has made it possible to test whether the leather in the shoe has any harmful chemicals and how strong the product is. So in this way the word level facility for 1000 different tests including high risk, chemical and physical durability of leather, footwear component, garments and textile will further increase the export of leather products from Agra. State government bore 80 percent expense of this lab which costs 15.5 crore rupees.

The unique experiments of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who is involved in making the environment of Uttar Pradesh friendly for industries have opened new avenues for industrialisation in the state. State government has planned to establish 31 common facility centres with the cost of 200 crore rupees for providing services to the local industries of the state as per their need. 14 out of these are ready and the remaining 17 will be functional within a few months.

## NO HINDRANCE IN ESTABLISHMENT OF INDUSTRIES

During the covid scenario Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is using the large number of 90 lakh medium, small and micro industries for increasing the industrial development of the state and providing job avenues. Taking a big step towards removal of the hindrances which come in the way of establishing industries in the state, Yogi government has approved Uttar Pradesh micro small and medium enterprises (facilitation of establishment and operation) act 2020 through cabinet bycirculation on 18 August 2020. Provisions have been made under this new act that The approval certificate will be issued within 72 hours of submitting documents by any industrialist at the district industries centre. Once this certificate has been released the unit will not need to get any kind of

> “ODOP scheme will help in the rise of unique handicraft and art of Uttar Pradesh and provide employment to skilled artisans. I hope that this MSME sector can realise the Omni directional development and carry forward the art of state to the world.”
>
> **— Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India**

permission from any government department for 900 days and he can immediately start his industry. Through this new act efforts are being made to achieve the target of facilitating 5 lakh new jobs in 1 year. The new act has provision for the formation of a facilitation council at division level so that the problems of industries can be solved on priority at division level.

## MSME: A GREAT SUPPORT IN COVID PANDEMIC

Uttar Pradesh has around 90 lakh registered and non registered MSME units. Before the coronavirus scenario, when the Yogi Government was busy increasing the investment and business, this sector moved fastly and brought exponential increase in the exports. When covid hit the state then MSME units produced so much of PPE kits, masks and sanitizers that the state became independent in these things. After that came the biggest crisis of oxygen supply during the second wave. After contacting the industrialists oxygen supply was started from industrial units to hospitals. Some units have started setting up of the plants for oxygen production. Now the MSME sector is all prepared for the possible third wave also. Children are in the highest danger of getting infected during the third wave of covid. According to it Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is making arrangements of the resources now. The MSME sector is also making preparations regarding this. Preparations for the production of the equipment which is used in treatment of children have started. MSMe sector units will produce the masks, ventilator and other equipment for children separately. Grants for this have also been arranged.

## ONE DISTRICT ONE PRODUCT ODOP GAVE NEW IDENTITY TO UP

### JOB AVENUES

**Around 25 lakh people have got the opportunity of livelihood and employment under ODOP till date.**

### MARGIN MONEY SCHEME

**5122 beneficiaries have received benefit of ODOP margin money scheme in 2020-21 which was started with an aim to provide monetary help for establishing any project.**

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

**Under this an artison will get 10 days free of cost residential training. After completing the training the artisan will get a certificate as well as an Advanced toolkit.**

### E-COMMERCE FACILITY

**ODOP has collaboration with stakeholders like quality control of India and Bombay stock exchange. Flipkart, Amazon, eBay are e-commerce partners.**

### WORKING CAPITAL LOAN

**Facility of 26000 crore working capital loan has been provided to around 10 lakh MSME after the lockdown.**

### G I TAG

**15 products of ODOP have bagged G I tag. 10 new products are under consideration. 22 common facility centres are at the different stages of getting permission.**

### SHRAM SAMMAN SCHEME

**Under Vishwakarma shram Samman scheme a total of 68418 beneficiaries have been benefited while 30 crore rupees have been distributed under the scheme this year.**

### ARTISON TRAINING

**Under the ODOP scheme 41000 artisans have got training till date. Around 400000 tool kits have also been distributed among these artisans.**

ONE DISTRICT ONE PRODUCT
UTTAR PRADESH

Foreign tourists with saints in the Kumbh Mela held in Prayagraj in the year 2019

# YOGI'S GOOD GOVERNANCE GAVE IMPETUS TO TOURISM

Situated in the heartland of India, Uttar Pradesh is the unique state which encompasses the incredible scenes of confluence of cultures and faiths. After reaching at the helm of affairs on 19th March 2017, Yogi Adityanath started his efforts to make Uttar Pradesh shine brightly on the map of tourism. New tourism policy was announced. The biggest cultural event of the world Prayagraj Kumbh was organised in a grand manner in the year 2019 under the supervision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. More than 23 crore people attended this event. This brought Uttar Pradesh on the map of World tourism as an important centre. Along with this started the tradition of grand

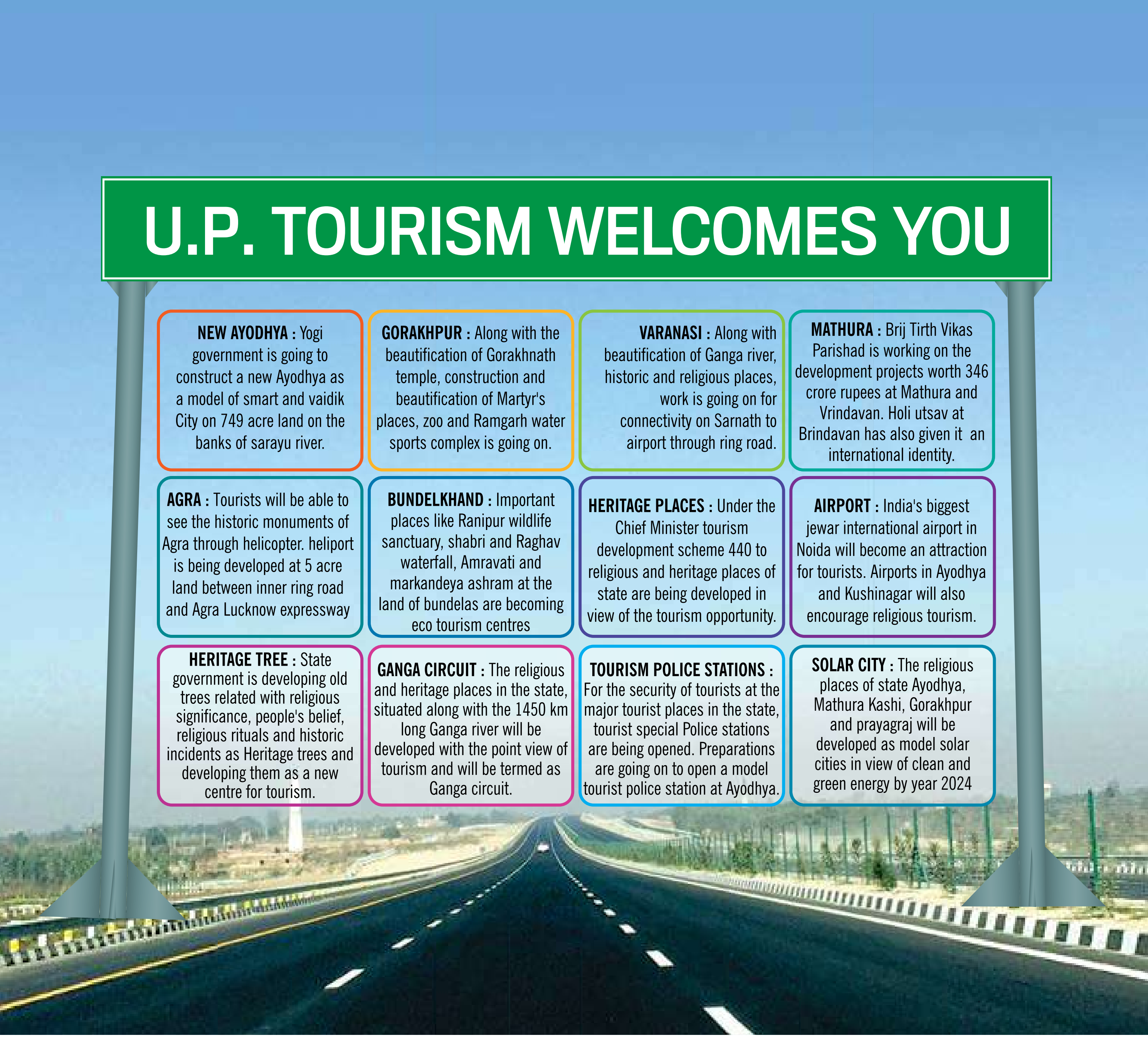
programs of Deepotsav in Ayodhya, Krishnotsav in Mathura, rangotsav in Barsana and Shivratri and Dev Deepawali in Varanasi. Deepotsav in Ayodhya has secured its place in Guinness Book of World records continuously. The priority given by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to the development of tourism is showing encouraging results. According to the Indian tourism statistics, in 2020, Uttar Pradesh is on the first place in the country in terms of domestic fall of tourists. In the year 2019 the state was in second place in the same category. After directions of the chief minister many circuits have been identified in the state which includes Ramayana circuit, braj circuit, Mahabharat circuit, Shakti peeth circuit, spiritual circuit, Jain circuit, and Buddhist circuit. Many new attractions have been made available in the field of tourism by organisation and wide scale promotion of different festivals, celebrations and fairs by the State Government. The upcoming hitech filmcity in Noida will also give new dimensions to the possibilities of tourism in Uttar Pradesh.

## DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL PLACES

First time in Uttar Pradesh Yogi Government has made an elaborate

> “The land of Uttar Pradesh, enriched with natural splendor, confluence of cultures and saga of pride invites every person of this world, who longs for peace, calmness and pleasure. Lord Rama is here, ShriKrishna is here, Mahaveer and Kabir also here.
>
> — Yogi Adityanath,
> Chief Minister Uttar Pradesh

Characters of Ramlila during Deepotsav in Ayodhya



# U.P. TOURISM WELCOMES YOU

**NEW AYODHYA :** Yogi government is going to construct a new Ayodhya as a model of smart and vaidik City on 749 acre land on the banks of sarayu river.

**GORAKHPUR :** Along with the beautification of Gorakhnath temple, construction and beautification of Martyr's places, zoo and Ramgarh water sports complex is going on.

**VARANASI :** Along with beautification of Ganga river, historic and religious places, work is going on for connectivity on Sarnath to airport through ring road.

**MATHURA :** Brij Tirth Vikas Parishad is working on the development projects worth 346 crore rupees at Mathura and Vrindavan. Holi utsav at Brindavan has also given it an international identity.

**AGRA :** Tourists will be able to see the historic monuments of Agra through helicopter. heliport is being developed at 5 acre land between inner ring road and Agra Lucknow expressway

**BUNDELKHAND :** Important places like Ranipur wildlife sanctuary, shabri and Raghav waterfall, Amravati and markandeya ashram at the land of bundelas are becoming eco tourism centres

**HERITAGE PLACES :** Under the Chief Minister tourism development scheme 440 to religious and heritage places of state are being developed in view of the tourism opportunity.

**AIRPORT :** India's biggest jewar international airport in Noida will become an attraction for tourists. Airports in Ayodhya and Kushinagar will also encourage religious tourism.

**HERITAGE TREE :** State government is developing old trees related with religious significance, people's belief, religious rituals and historic incidents as Heritage trees and developing them as a new centre for tourism.

**GANGA CIRCUIT :** The religious and heritage places in the state, situated along with the 1450 km long Ganga river will be developed with the point view of tourism and will be termed as Ganga circuit.

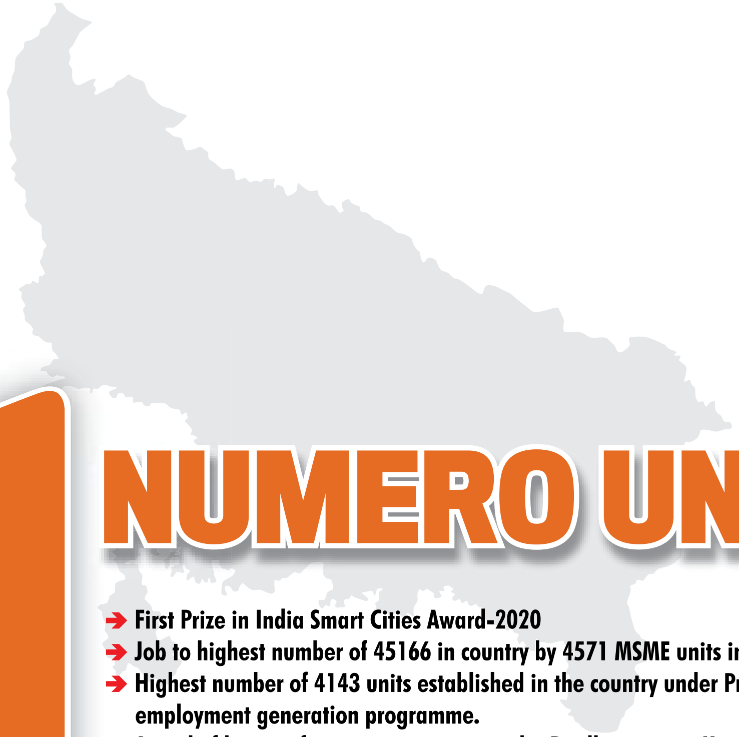
**TOURISM POLICE STATIONS :** For the security of tourists at the major tourist places in the state, tourist special Police stations are being opened. Preparations are going on to open a model tourist police station at Ayodhya.

**SOLAR CITY :** The religious places of state Ayodhya, Mathura Kashi, Gorakhpur and prayagraj will be developed as model solar cities in view of clean and green energy by year 2024

work plan for the development of religious and cultural places and is working on it. Government has constituted braj Tirth Kshetra Vikas Parishad, naimisharanya Tirth kshetra Vikas Parishad, vindhya Tirth Kshetra Vikas Parishad, sukhradham Tirth Kshetra Vikas Parishad, chitrkut Tirth Kshetra Vikas Parishad and Devi Patan Tirth Kshetra Vikas Parishad to give impetus to the development of tourist facilities at these religious places. Along with it places related to Mahabharata saga are being developed under Mahabharat circuit. Shravasti, kapilvastu and Kushinagar are being developed under buddha circuit while tourism facilities are being developed at Chitrakoot and shringverpur under Ramayan circuit. On the same lines tourism facilities are taking new shape in Agra and Fatehpur Sikri under Jain and Sufi circuit.

## KASHI VISHWANATH DHAM WILL GIVE A NEW IDENTITY TO TOURISM

A unique Vishwanath Dham corridor is taking shape from the banks of the Ganges to the Vishwanath Darbar in Varanasi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Kashi Vishwanath Dham Corridor project being built on 5 lakh square feet at a cost of more than 1000 crores on March 8, 2019 in Varanasi. The cultural heritage of Varanasi will be contained in the corridor area. Along with the main temple complex, Banaras Gallery, City Museum, Spiritual Reading Room, Vedic Center, Mumukshu Bhawan will be special attractions. Apart from this, arrangements will be made for open air theatre, multipurpose hall, visitor facilitation center, banquet hall, business center, administrative building. Kashi Vishwanath Dham Corridor will give a new identity to the tourism of UP. There will be arrangements for more than two lakh devotees to visit Vishwanath Darbar every day.



# NUMERO UNO UP

- First Prize in India Smart Cities Award-2020
- Job to highest number of 45166 in country by 4571 MSME units in one year
- Highest number of 4143 units established in the country under Pradhan mantri employment generation programme.
- Award of best performance in country under Pradhan mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana
- Best in country in terms of sugar cane and sugar production and payment of 1.40 lakh crore of sugarcane
- First state in the country to provide subsidy to farmers through DBT
- First in the country in providing free of cost power connection to 1 crore 38 lakh houses under saubhagya scheme
- Number one in production of food grains, wheat, potato, mango, gooseberry, green peas and milk.
- Best in country by giving approval for construction of more than 40 lakh PM aawas
- First in country by providing free of cost gas cylinder to 1.5 crore eligible houses under ujjwala scheme
- State with highest vaccination and number one in sanitizer production
- First state in country to form women help desks in all police stations
- On the way to becoming the first state with five international airports and five expressways.
- Number one in the country by starting construction of 30 new medical colleges in the field of medical education.
- Maximum number of 7.02 crore accounts opened in UP under Pradhan mantri Jan dhan Yojana.
- First in the country by providing benefits of the Atal pension scheme to 36 lakh 60 thousand 615 people.
- State with maximum government procurement in the country through e marketplace GEM
- First country in state to implement state health policy and skill development policy
- State ahead in e-challan system and e-prosecution system.
- E-governance prize for excellent performance to Uttar Pradesh by Union panchayati Raj ministry
- First in the country in establishment of MSME
- First state in the country to declare human wild animal conflict as disaster
- First in country with highest number of livestock and cow protection and dairy farming
- First state in country to amend the mandi adhiniyam for the market of farmers
- Uttar Pradesh is at the first place in the country in implementation of PM Swa Nidhi Yojana.
- Ranked first in country by construction of 2 crore 61 lakh personal toilets

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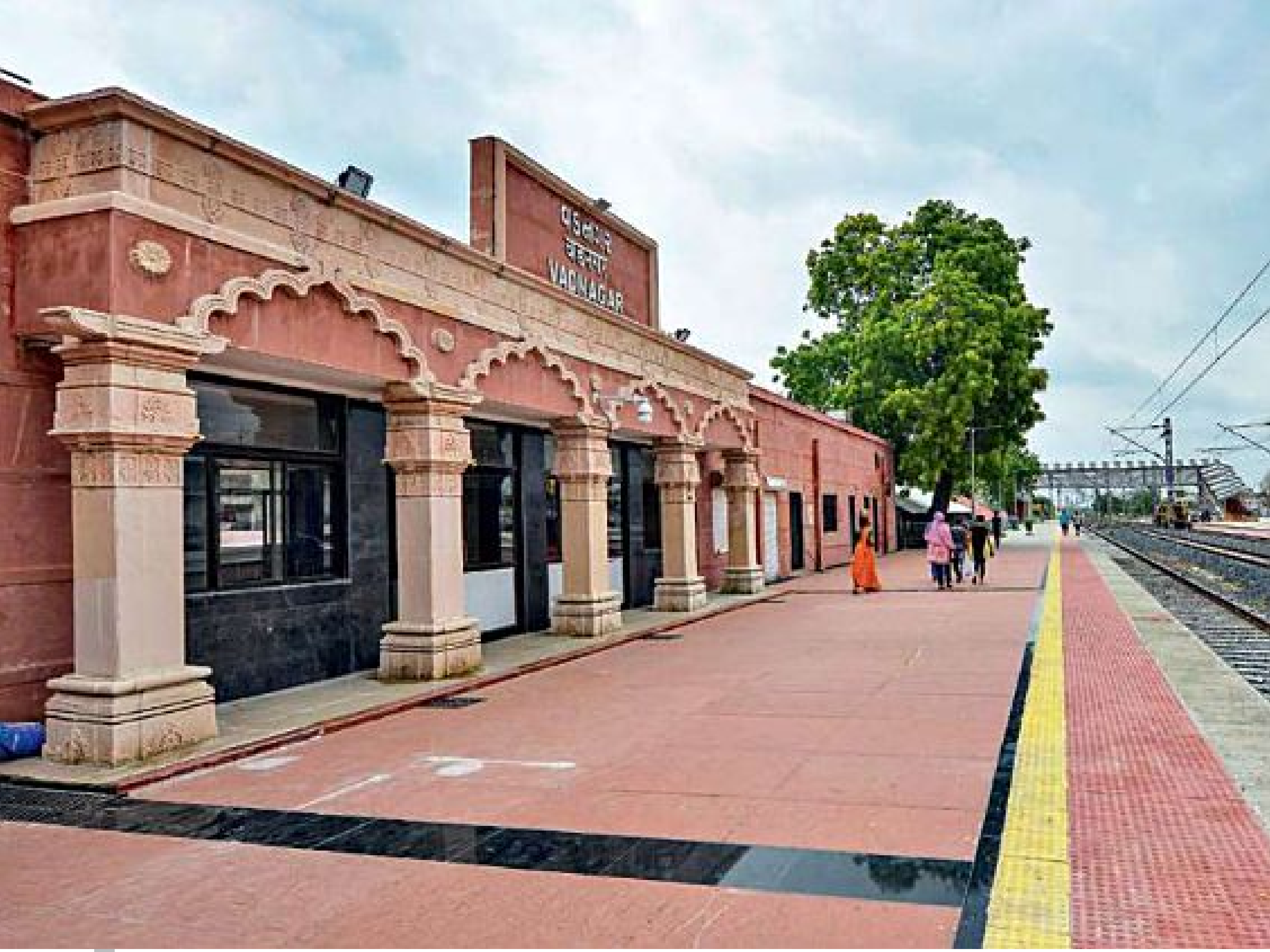


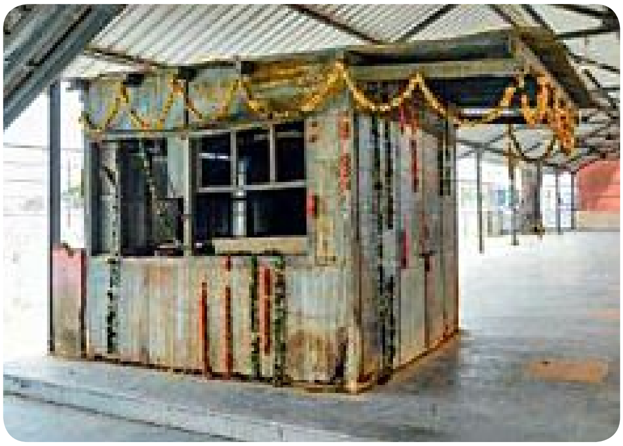
THE STATES
GUJARAT

# THE MODI MEMORABILIA

**Vadnagar, the railway station where Narendra Modi sold tea as a child, gets an impressive facelift and broad-gauge connectivity. It's as much about immortalising the PM's past as it is about nurturing the town's present**

By Rahul Noronha in Vadnagar

*Photographs by* RAJWANT RAWAT

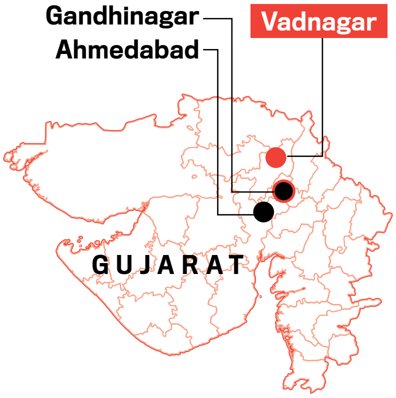


**PRESERVING THE LEGACY** (Clockwise from left) The revamped Vadnagar railway station; the tea stall Narendra Modi and his father used to run at the station; Kirti Toran monument; the primary school where Modi studied till class 6; and Sharmishtha Lake

Courtesy: UPENDRA KUMAR

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated a series of railway infrastructure projects around Ahmedabad on July 16, all eyes were fixed on the Gandhinagar Capital railway station, redeveloped with modern amenities and billed as world-class. Of the four other stations that got a facelift, as part of electrification and broad-gauge conversion of the 55-km-long Mehsana-Varetha rail line, one stood out for its association with a VVIP politician and the legacy of his days as a '*chaiwala*'. Vadnagar station, where, the story goes, a young boy called Narendra used to help his father Damodardas Modi sell tea on the platform.

Modi has always worn the tea-seller identity on his sleeve, as a badge of his connect with the masses. For his ardent fans, the PM's '*chaiwala*' past symbolises every ordinary Indian's rise to success against all odds. The older part of the refurbished Vadnagar station preserves this legacy.



In the old canteen, housed within a wood and metal structure, lies a table top with a small fireplace that would have run on coal or wood back in the day. It was here that Modi, till he was eight years old, helped his father run their tea stall. There are no pictures or memorabilia linking the PM to the place but it attracts many tourists and visitors. During his July 16 visit to Vadnagar station, railways minister Ashwini Vaishnaw instructed officials to beautify the canteen. Railway officials say the canteen will be spruced up and enclosed within a glass structure.

Vadnagar is a town in Gujarat's Mehsana district and is located about 100 km from Ahmedabad. Census 2011 puts its population at around 150,000. For long, Vadnagar remained cut off from the state's major rail networks, depriving its residents of the socioeconomic advantages that come with good transport connectivity.

With the gauge upgrade and

ગાંધીનગર કેપિટલ
गांधीनगर कैपिटल GANDHINAGAR CAPITAL

**FUTURE-READY** Gandhinagar Capital railway station

electrification, the station is gaining importance, now that it is linked to the Ahmedabad-Jaipur-Delhi railway hub. Railway officials say this will speed up passenger travel besides economic prosperity for the town and the region at large. Agriculture is the main economic activity, with tobacco, groundnut, cotton and castor being the main cash crops. The broad-gauge line is expected to open up opportunities for both farmers and traders and attract industry in the long run.

Besides the Mehsana-Varetha section, the railways have also completed electrification of the Surendra Nagar-Pipavav stretch. The route is crucial for freight movement between the Pipavav port and North India. The star attraction among the projects inaugurated by PM Modi is the Gandhinagar Capital railway station, with a 318-room five-star hotel built by the Leela Group atop it. The station, redeveloped at a cost of Rs 71.5 crore, has an interfaith prayer hall, a baby feeding room, a green (environment-friendly) building and extensive fire safety, among a host of features.

Vadnagar is Modi's hometown but none of his family members live here anymore. Modi's mother, Heeraben, lives in Gandhinagar with his brother Pankajbhai. The PM's other brother, Somabhai, stays in Ahmedabad and often visits Vadnagar to oversee an old age home he runs here. Modi lived in Vadnagar's Kala Vasudev locality. The family house was sold to a Thakur family after his father's demise. "At the age of eight, Narendra Modi came in contact with RSS functionaries, especially Laxmanrao Inamdar, who introduced him to the Sangh and made him a *bal swayamsewak*," says Upendrabhai Patel, a resident of Vadnagar.

Following a visit by Union culture ministry officials, Modi's primary school in Vadnagar is being renovated and is likely to be converted into a '*prerna kendra*' (centre of inspiration). The town itself has undergone changes as part of development of the Vadnagar-Modhera-Patan heritage tourism circuit. A pathway has been built along the Sharmishtha Lake and the Kirti Toran monument has been restored. "While we appreciate the beautification of the lake, the inauguration has been delayed. Besides, municipal authorities need to bear in mind the PM's Swachh Bharat slogan and focus on cleanliness," says Upendra Patel, a local tour guide.

At the new clock tower, Jitendra Prajapati runs a tea outlet. His claim to fame is that his house was located opposite Modi's. "The PM's father helped my father set up this tea shop. Our town is world famous due to Modi*ji*. He has bestowed greatness upon it," says Prajapati. The mood in Vadnagar is upbeat—courtesy the PM, there's a legacy to cherish and a future to look forward to. ■

> **Connected to the Ahmedabad-Jaipur-Delhi rail hub, Vadnagar is gaining importance. The upgrade is expected to speed up passenger travel and bring economic prosperity to the region**

INDIA TODAY
AUTO
REPORT

Presented by
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# It's Raining SUVs

## THE BEST OF THE BIG WHEELS

THE NEW BMW R 1250 GS ADVENTURE IS HERE

+

HOW TO TACKLE THE MONSOONS

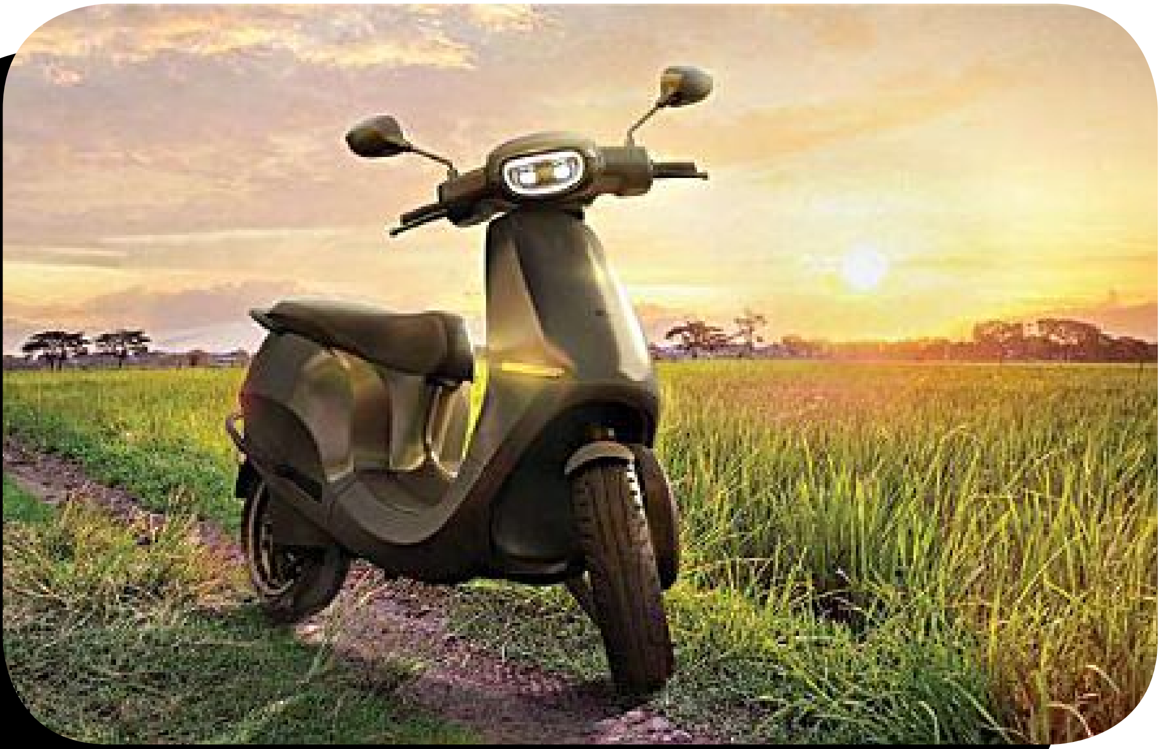
TECH TALK: EV CHARGING EXPLAINED

POWERED BY AutoToday

**YOGENDRA PRATAP**

# GOING INTO HIGH GEAR

## WITH SALES NEARLY TOUCHING 2019 LEVELS, 2021 HOLDS PROMISE FOR THE AUTO INDUSTRY



The first quarter of 2021 has been remarkable for the automotive industry. Despite some very tough months for the country as a whole, sales have bounced back to not just last year's levels but nearly to 2019 levels. The trends emerging from the lockdown reinforce the previous direction, in terms of the move towards more luxurious and feature-laden vehicles in each segment, and towards SUVs in particular at one end of the spectrum even as demand has shifted back to the entry level bare-basic commuter at the other end.

The vehicles in demand now have long waiting periods, up to nine months in some instances, though that is largely because of the global semiconductor shortage. In many countries, pre-owned vehicles have seen a spurt in prices and nearly-new second hand vehicles are selling above list prices of brand new cars. The record-breaking fuel prices do not seem to have dampened demand yet. This is because there are no alternatives, with only small players in the electric two-wheeler space at one end of the scale and the very high-end vehicles from premium and luxury auto brands at the other end.

All that is going to change very soon with Ola Electric announcing the opening of bookings for its first product—an electric scooter. It got over 100,000 bookings on the first day. To be made at its Futurefactory, which has an installed capacity of 10 million vehicles a year, Ola may well herald the electric revolution we have been waiting for. ■

## BEST-SELLING SUVs THIS QUARTER

Indians have taken a real fancy to SUVs and many of the chunky vehicles have become best-sellers. In the quarter ending June 2021, the Hyundai **Creta** emerged as the highest selling SUV, racking up a sales figure of 29,931 units. Close behind was Maruti Suzuki's **Vitara Brezza,** which found 26,701 buyers. The Tata **Nexon** was third with a figure of 22,410 units, followed by the Hyundai **Venue** (20,950 units), Kia **Seltos** (20,912 units) and Kia **Sonet,** which sold 20,314 units.

1

2

3

4

5

6

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# ROAD TO RECOVERY

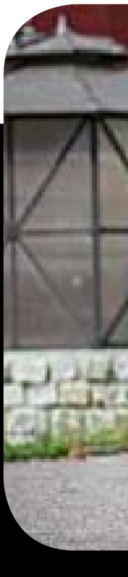
**THE LAST YEAR WAS TOUGH FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY, AND THOUGH THINGS MAY BE COMING BACK TO NORMAL, THE WORLD HAS CHANGED. WE ASKED CAPTAINS OF THE AUTO INDUSTRY ABOUT THE ROAD AHEAD FOR THEIR COMPANIES AND THE INDUSTRY IN A POST-COVID WORLD**

### S.S. Kim

**Managing director & CEO, Hyundai Motor India**

During these challenging times, we have stood by societies and communities by reaching out with various initiatives that helped them tide over the adversity. We have seen that new-age buyers in India now prefer brands that showcase the human side of enterprise. With markets opening up and customer sentiments improving, Hyundai will also continue to stand by its customers, introducing world-class products and services that exceed customer aspirations. The newly launched Hyundai Alcazar has been receiving tremendous response from customers, setting new benchmarks in the industry.

In June 2021, we have also recorded growth in both the domestic and exports markets over the same period last year, presenting a positive consumer outlook after the lockdown period. Over the last few months, we have been conducting operations with cautious optimism. Currently, the domestic market is witnessing a significant level of demand as customers continue to opt for personal mobility. As we continue to drive excellence in every sphere, we are also focussed on ensuring the development of advanced technologies and products that will usher in a brighter and greener future for humanity.

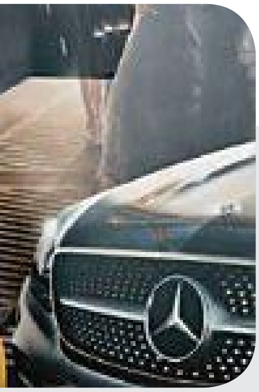


### Zac Hollis

**Brand director, Skoda Auto India**

The Covid-19 outbreak did cripple a lot of industries, including the auto industry. However, green shoots of revival were seen from the end of 2020 and the markets had started moving on a positive growth trajectory before the second wave posed serious challenges. But now, we find that business sentiments are gradually improving, as the Covid-19 infection curve is moving downwards.

With the launch of our first SUV under the India 2.0 project, Skoda Kushaq, we have seen pent-up demand in the market where consumers are looking forward to new products. We are seeing a lot of



### Martin Schwenk

**Managing director & CEO, Mercedes-Benz India**

We are very satisfied with our sales recovery, which has grown by a solid 65 per cent in the first six months of the year. Almost all our products, be it newly launched or existing ones, have a waitlist period, and we are ramping up production and sales to cater to the increased demand. We are optimistic about the road to recovery from here and this optimism is buoyed by the overwhelming response to our products from customers.

There is a significant shift in consumer mindset towards digital consumption, and it is true for even a luxury marque like Mercedes-Benz. Our digital sales has grown significantly and comprises 20 per cent of our current volumes in India and we expect this trend to remain stable. The shift to electric mobility will be faster for the two- and three-wheeler segment and gradually it will shift to the four-wheeler segment. We are happy with the interest level for Mercedes-Benz's luxury EV EQC, which has a strong order book from early adopters of luxury EVs.

### Shashank Srivastava

**Senior executive director, marketing and sales, Maruti Suzuki India**

We do see green shoots of recovery in July and are quite hopeful. Obviously, there are many uncertainties in this. A third Covid wave or high fuel prices could be a dampener. That said, it does appear that the recovery is under way. There has also been a big shift in consumer preference in adopting and using digital platforms throughout the buying journey. With rising fuel prices, we see an increased sensitivity to running costs of vehicles as well.

While it is true that in future EVs will become the dominant vehicle type, that is still many years away. EVs offer very low running cost and are very low on emissions but, unfortunately, because of the above reasons they are also not yet viable for consumers. We have seen a demand surge for CNG vehicles which offer very low running costs compared to petrol and diesel.

consumers coming to our showrooms for test drives of the Kushaq.

I feel there will be a push towards personal mobility which will automatically drive demand for new cars. We also anticipate an increase in the used car segment. The EV topic is growing stronger in India and we certainly want to participate in it. When the shift happens will mainly depend on the development of infrastructure and on regulation.

### Jyoti Malhotra

**Managing director, Volvo Car India**

2020 was difficult for the entire automobile industry. However, 2021 has brought a ray of hope, predominantly after the government announced the ease in lockdown restrictions and consumer spending across segments increased. At Volvo, we have recorded a 52 per cent growth in the first six months of 2021 compared to the same period last year.

There is definitely curiosity regarding electric vehicles in India and customers are excited about the shift. The government too is promoting adoption of EVs with different initiatives and tax policies. We strongly believe that the transition to electric cars will be led by the luxury segment in India. Volvo Car India has already announced the introduction of its first electric car the XC40 Recharge in India and we are committed to launch one new electric car every year from 2021 onwards. We are expecting 80 per cent of our sales from EVs by 2025 and Volvo Car India will become an all-electric car company by 2030.

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Keep going beyond the finish line in the all-new Mercedes-AMG A 35 4MATIC. Unleash pure performance with the AMG Turbocharged engine. Stay connected with the latest MBUX and Mercedes me connect with NTG 6.0 and make heads turn with the powerful AMG Exterior. The Mercedes-Benz A 200 and the Mercedes-Benz A 200d are also available.

Make a move today.

For technical specifications of the model available in India, please refer to the product brochure or contact the nearest Mercedes-Benz dealership. Accessories, colours and fitments shown may not be part of standard specification. The A-Class AMG A 35 4MATIC meets Bharat Stage VI equivalent emission norms. Mercedes-Benz India Private Limited - CIN: U34102PN1994PTC083160.

# TOP OF THE LINE

*THE LATEST OFFERINGS FROM THE LEADING CARMAKERS–BMW, MERCEDES, LAND ROVER AND MORE*

## HYUNDAI ALCAZAR

**Engines:**
2-litre petrol/
1.5-litre diesel
**Power:** 159bhp/ 115bhp
**Price:**
Rs 16.3-19.99 lakh
ex-showroom,
Delhi

The Alcazar comes with smart styling and an option of six or seven seats. With a host of luxury features, the SUV comes in both petrol and diesel variants, with Hyundai also offering both manual and automatic gearboxes.

## MINI CONVERTIBLE

The Mini Convertible has received updates to its design as well as the cabin, accompanied by additions to the features list. While the fascia and the rear end has seen a redesign, the interiors too get a makeover in form of a new infotainment system and a new digital instrument panel. New upholstery and trim has also been added.

**Engine:**
1,998cc petrol
**Power:** 192bhp
**Price:** Rs 44 lakh,
ex-showroom,
Delhi

## LAND ROVER DEFENDER 90

The short-wheelbase version of the Defender is now available in India. The Defender 90 measures in at 4,583 mm in length and has a wheelbase of 2,587 mm. It can be had as a five-seater, with Land Rover also offering an optional front jump seat. The SUV also features a choice of three engines.

## BMW 5-SERIES

BMW has launched a facelifted version of the 5-Series sedan, offering it in three variants–the 530i M Sport, 520d Luxury Line and the 530d M Sport. The new sedans get more kit than before and are 27mm longer than the outgoing model. Inside, there are more luxury features than before, as well as an updated infotainment system.

**Engines:** 1,998cc petrol/ 1,995cc diesel/ 2,993cc diesel
**Power:** 252bhp/ 190bhp/ 265bhp
**Price:** Rs 62.9-71.9 lakh, ex-showroom, Delhi

**Engines:** 2-litre petrol/ 3-litre petrol/ 3-litre diesel
**Power:** 300bhp/ 400bhp/ 300bhp
**Price:** Rs 76.57 lakh-Rs 1.12 crore, ex-showroom, Delhi

## ISUZU HI-LANDER

The Hi-Lander is an entry step into the world of D-Max trucks. It comes in two-wheel drive guise, with a BS VI compliant diesel engine. The base model comes with minimal bells and whistles–something of a blank canvas for those who want to modify it to their own specifications.

**Engine:** 1.9-litre diesel
**Power:** 163bhp
**Price:** Rs 16.98 lakh ex-showroom, Delhi

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## SKODA KUSHAQ

Skoda's comeback car is the Kushaq, which means 'the king'. The Kushaq is based on an India spec platform, and the company says it has achieved 95 per cent localisation. The SUV comes with aggressive styling and a choice of two petrol engines. It also has a host of new features to take on its rivals.

**Engines:** 1.0-litre TSI/ 1.5-litre TSI
**Power:** 115bhp/ 150bhp
**Price:** Rs 10.49-17.59 lakh ex-showroom, Delhi

## MERCEDES S-CLASS

The 'best car in the world' just got better! Mercedes is offering only the Launch Edition which is based on the AMG Line trim level. Noticeable differences include a new chrome grille with three horizontal blades, a new front bumper with larger air intakes, pop-out door handles and wraparound LED tail-lights. The car also gets a slew of optional features, with two engine choices. Both petrol and diesel options sport Mercedes' 4Matic all-wheel drive system.

**Engines:** 2,925cc diesel/ 2,999cc petrol
**Power:** 330bhp/ 367bhp
**Price:** Rs 2.17-2.19 crore, ex-showroom, Delhi

## MAHINDRA BOLERO NEO

Mahindra has rechristened the TUV 300 as the Bolero Neo. Apart from a mild design makeover, the Neo features a MLD (mechanical locking differential) in the top-of-the-line variants, which helps in off-road situations, making the Neo a more capable option in rough terrain. The Neo is available only with a diesel engine.

**Engine:** 1.5-litre diesel
**Power:** 100bhp
**Price:** Rs 8.48-9.99 lakh ex-showroom, Delhi

# TWO WHEELS, ALL FUN

*A LOOK AT THE LATEST ON OFFER FROM THE STABLES OF BMW, HARLEY DAVIDSON, TRIUMPH AND YAMAHA*

**Engine:**
660cc triple
**Power:** 81 bhp
**Price:**
Rs 6.95 lakh,
ex-showroom
(Delhi)

## TRIUMPH TRIDENT 660

The latest addition to Triumph's roadster portfolio is the Trident. It comes with classic styling and has new-age features like Bluetooth connectivity, turn-by-turn navigation, ride-by-wire and switch cube GoPro control. Power comes from a 660cc triple engine tuned to offer better performance in the mid-range, to enable comfortable in-city rideability.

## BMW 1250 GS RANGE

The 2021 editions have updated electronics and features, including a new integral ABS pro mode, eco-riding mode, hill start control pro, dynamic engine brake control and cornering lights. There are also '40 years GS' special editions of the series.

**Engine:**
1,254cc Boxer
**Power** : 136bhp
**Price:**
Rs 20.45-
22.4 lakh,
ex-showroom
(Delhi)

## YAMAHA FZ-X

A new variant based on the FZ series, the FZ-X features retro styling, with an LED headlight and digital instruments. It sports fork gaiters and a plastic sump guard, and has a newly-designed tank and rear end. The FZ-X uses the same 149cc engine as seen on the FZ series of bikes.

**Engine:**
149cc
**Power:** 12.4bhp
**Price:**
Rs 1.17 lakh,
ex-showroom
(Delhi)

## HARLEY DAVIDSON PAN AMERICA 1250

Harley's first adventure tourer comes with the new Revolution Max engine, integrated into the chassis to reduce the overall weight. It also features a host of electronics including ride modes.

**Engine:**
1,250cc LC
**Power:** 150bhp
**Price:**
Rs 16.9 lakh,
ex-showroom
(Delhi)

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MILLION

# A 100 MILLION STRONG

It is no ordinary feat to achieve a mega milestone of 100 million units. But our very own Hero MotoCorp has done it. Time to celebrate then

The Hero Xpulse 200 was awarded the IMOTY 2020 and Dr Pawan Munjal, Chairman & CEO, Hero MotoCorp was there to collect the trophy

Just a few months back, the 100 millionth bike, a Hero Xtreme 160R, rolled-out of the Company's manufacturing facility in Haridwar, in the northern Indian hill state of Uttarakhand. With this Hero MotoCorp has retained the coveted title of the world's largest manufacturer of two-wheelers for the 20th year in succession. Now that's an achievement to celebrate. Hero MotoCorp's achievement of this landmark is one of the fastest global achievements of the 100 million cumulative production mark, with the last 50 Million units coming in a span of just seven years. Just goes to show how a home grown company has gone on to dominate the world.

Since 2011, Hero MotoCorp has also rapidly expanded its global footprint to over 40 countries across Asia, Africa, Middle East, South and Central America. The company's manufacturing base now spans across eight state-of-the-art facilities, including six in India and one each in Bangladesh and Colombia. Not just manufacturing, all the new motorcycles, scooters and new mobility solutions of Hero MotoCorp are now being designed and developed at the world class Centre of Innovation and Technology (CIT) in Jaipur and the Tech Centre Germany (TCG) near Munich.

Not content with the achievements Dr Munjal also outlined Hero MotoCorp's plans and vision for the next five years. As part of the next five-year plan, Hero MotoCorp will introduce over 10 products – including variants, refreshes and upgrades - every year. Not just that Hero MotoCorp also has a steep growth target for its markets outside India. Further to this the company is concerned about the environment too and as a result will continue to reduce its carbon footprint through its green facilities and fuel-efficient products.

Now that's a real Hero.

## Road to 100 Million

**1994** First Million
**2001** Five Million
**2004** 10 Million
**2008** 25 Million
**2013** 50 Million
**2017** 75 Million
**2021** 100 Million

# RECHARGED AMBITION

## THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE REVOLUTION IS CLOSER THAN EVER, WITH EVEN TOP OF THE LINE SUVs SWITCHING FROM FUEL-POWERED ENGINES. AMONG THEM IS THE AUDI E-TRON, WHICH ABHIK DAS TOOK FOR A SPIN

**Power:** 408bhp
**Torque:** 664Nm
**0-100kmph:** ~5.7 sec
**Range:** ~359-484km (claimed)
**Price:** Rs 1.05-1.1 crore (estimated)

GURDEEP BHALLA

Audis are really likeable cars, ranking among my personal favourites—my love for them stems from the brilliant mix of technology, performance and classy, understated appeal. An electric amalgamation would encompass all these factors, and that's exactly what the new Audi e-tron SUV is aiming for.

The e-tron borrows much of its underpinnings from the Q5's MLB evo platform but the dimensions place it among the likes of the Q7 while the styling is closer to that of the Q8. That sporty, low-slung, fast SUV look is on point with current trends. The e-tron gets trick Digital Matrix LED headlights that perform a quick light show upon locking and unlocking the car but I'm sure they're capable of much more given their projection capability with brighter, longer throw illumination.

'A bit more' seems to be the underlying theme for the e-tron. Step inside, and that's exactly what you get. The cabin is airy and roomy, while the wide dashboard design highlights the sense of width. The dashboard design is updated and is much like the Q8 but you could be left wanting for a bit more when it comes to the trims inside the cabin. A striking new addition is the gear selector, which may not seem intuitive at first, but once used, you'll appreciate the thought and effort that went into its placement and design. There are screens galore in the cabin, complete with haptic feedback, although a softer press would've been ideal, in my opinion. There is space at the front and more at the back with the flat flooring and generous shoulder room, while 660-litres of luggage can be stowed in the boot, easily expandable to nearly three times that number with the rear seats folded down.

The SUV design allows neat packaging of the 95kWh

**SHEER CLASS**
The Audi e-tron (above); views of the driver's console and instrumentation panels (below)

battery pack, but it's what it is capable of that really matters more. The WLTP cycle claimed range is a shade above 480km but the thing about electric vehicles is that this figure entirely depends on how you handle the accelerator—the faster you press it towards the floor, the faster the range depletes. Highway runs will see you heading to a charger sooner than driving in the city, where the regenerative braking can add some range in stop-and-go conditions.

Audi claims a 5.7 second time for a 0-100kmph run, and while I didn't get the stopwatch out to test that, the e-tron is assuredly quick. Surprisingly, this isn't evident at all in the early moments of the e-tron gathering speed. The electronics rein in the initial and instant torque of the two electric motors to the front and rear axles and offer a smooth start off the line, post which speed builds up rapidly. Such is the absence of drama that I didn't even realise the three-digit speeds I was doing till I looked to the dash. The throttle is linear and at no time did I feel that the electronic trickery would loosen its hold and allow the wide 255 section tyres to lose grip.

Braking is one time when the e-tron's weight is felt, cornering being the other; but the latter is where Audi has done a bit more. With a low centre of gravity thanks to the batteries on the floor and electric motors mounted low, there are inherent handling gains of an electric car that the e-tron benefits from. It's the standard adaptive suspension that Audi adds to the e-tron that manages the body roll so well that oodles of grip are available alongside the torque vectoring of the two motors. The ride quality is great all around, and Audi has done a splendid job of cocooning passengers from external noise. ■

# LEADING THE CHARGE

**MERCEDES HAS BECOME THE FIRST PREMIUM CAR MANUFACTURER TO LAUNCH A FULLY ELECTRIC VEHICLE IN INDIA. YOGENDRA PRATAP TAKES IT FOR A DRIVE**

NISHANT JHAMB

**FIRST AMONG EQUALS** The Mercedes Benz EQC, 1886 Edition

**Power:** 408bhp
**Torque:** 760 Nm
**0-100 kmph:** ~5.1 sec
**Range:** ~445-471km (claimed)
**Price:** Rs 1.4 crore (estimated)

The EQC shares its wheelbase with the GLC and is only slightly longer than its sibling and a little narrower and lower, a decision that was probably taken with aerodynamics in mind. However, although they share the same underpinnings, the EQC's resemblance to the GLC is fleeting.

While there is a standard model of the EQC, the one we got to drive was the Edition 1886. There are subtle design differences between the standard model and the 1886—badging on the front fenders as well as differences in the front grille and the alloys, which are 10-spoke 20-inch fittings with alternate black high gloss finished spokes with EQ blue lines. The proportions of the car do not suggest an electric vehicle, and that is due to the platform that it shares with an internal combustion engine vehicle.

While the exterior design may be nice, it is the interiors that are exciting, with a new layout for the dashboard, the air con vents as well as the IP and the infotainment screen. The elongated air vents are a welcome change from the small ones that are now so ubiquitous on Mercedes SUVs, while the bronze accents add class. The dual material seats with 1886 badging and golden beige stitching make for one of the more classy Mercedes cabins. Even though the interiors are electric, the space inside is not too great for the size of the vehicle. But the cabin is loaded with assistance and infotainment systems, with the latest NTG 6 MBUX system being fronted by a virtual assistant in the form of Hey Mercedes.

The paddles on the steering wheel are used not to change gears (as there are none) but to determine the levels of recuperation. All the test cycles peg the range of the vehicle on a single charge at well over 400km, but on our test drive the range was closer to 350+ km.

The on-board charger supports up to 7.5kWh of AC charging while the combined charging system can handle upto 100kW of fast charging. The company claims that a typical wall outlet will take about 20 hours to charge the EQC's battery fully from 10 per cent; a company-provided wall box will do it in 10 hours, while a 50kWh DC fast charger can do it in 90 mins.

When it comes to the drive, the EQC is sportscar quick. Throttle (or rather, pedal) response is electrifying, while all-wheel drive combined with the weight of the vehicle give it the ability to utilise the huge amounts of torque being fed to the wheels. The cabin is quiet and even the motor whine is silenced. The suspension is set up more for comfort and ride quality, and that was excellent for our drive on city roads (though the ground clearance was suspect when we went over many of the speedbreakers in the industrial township of Manesar). Now that most manufacturers have been working on electric assistance for steering for some time now it is not a surprise that the EQC is quite responsive and direct in response to steering inputs and in fact feels better than some of the Merc steering set ups that feel overly assisted. ■

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# TVS GOES ELECTRIC AGAIN

## TVS HAS LAUNCHED THE NEW iQUBE ELECTRIC SCOOTER WHICH PROMISES TO REPLACE YOUR EVERYDAY RUNABOUT. RAHUL GHOSH WENT TO THE COMPANY'S TEST FACILITY TO TRY IT OUT

GURDEEP BHALLA

**Specs:**
**Engine:** Bosch Electric Motor
**Battery** : 750 WH x 3 units
**Power:** 4.4 kW
**Torque:** 140 Nm
**Range:** 75 km (Arai Certified)
**Top Speed:** 78 kmph
**Price:** Rs 1.15 lakh (on sale now)

**The iQube** has been designed and developed entirely in India at TVS' facility in Hosur, Tamil Nadu. The scooter looks practical. The front end boasts of a unique looking slab-like light unit which houses LED headlights and winkers and the LED day time light sits atop the handlebar shroud. The front suspension comprises of a telescopic set up and the iQube rides on 12-inch chunky tyres shod with alloy wheels. The instrument panel, a work of art, is an all-colour screen developed in conjunction with Pricol.

The iQube gets a large floor board within which sits a set of lithium-ion battery packs. The other unit resides below the large under seat stowage area. The seat itself is a large two-seater unit and there is ample space on the floorboard too. At the back sits a rectangular all-LED tail light cluster.

Overall, the iQube looks simple yet futuristic. We especially love its iPark feature—at the press of a button, the scooter can be made to go both forward and reverse. Verty handy when parking.

It uses a hub mounted BLDC motor provided by Bosch. The batteries are manufactured in-house, although the cells are provided by LG. The motor develops 4.4 kW of peak power and TVS claims that it can provide the iQube with a top speed of 78 kmph and a zero to 40 kmph time of 4.2 seconds. The triple lithium-ion battery packs have a combined capacity of 2,250 Wh. Start up the iQube and you'll be met with silence. Twist the throttle, or the power regulator, and the scooter takes off brisk. It gets off to a limited speed in 'eco' mode, but one can shift to the 'power' mode on the go for prominently noticeable acceleration. However, if you do the opposite, the scooter slows down rapidly as regenerative gimmicks come into play. Getting up to the claimed top speed (70 kmph) is quick, but the scooter slows down after that. Interestingly, even when riding on top speed, you can barely tell since there is no sensation or noise.

At the TVS' test track, we could corner rather fast and enjoyed the scooter's rather balanced handling characteristics; the occasional bumps on the side roads we encountered were dismissed with ease. This gives us the confidence to say that the iQube will surely keep both the rider and the one riding pillion happy. The chunky tyres grip well too. The iQube also comes with a combined braking system instead of an ABS function. The rear tends to lock up easily when braking from top speeds and ABS is all the more important as one does not realise the speeds they are going at until the speedometer is consulted. Something to keep in mind while zipping down the road. ■

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IRS 2019 Q4 (TR)

# Welcome to the Grand Life

Drawing inspiration from Spanish palaces and castles, the Hyundai Alcazar doesn't just adopt the Spanish word for fortress as its name, but also exemplifies the ethos of one in every sense of the word. There are five key pillars that make the Hyundai Alcazar as formidable as a castle and as luxurious as a palace

Dual-tone Cognac Brown interiors & 26.03 cm (10.25") HD Touchscreen System

26.03 cm (10.25") multi display digital cluster with personalized themes

Voice enabled smart panoramic sunroof

Strong body structure with AHSS

**BUILT LIKE A FORTRESS**

The Alcazar's fortress like chassis offers strength and protection while arresting the attention of onlookers draped in a stylish outer layer complete with ornate detailing in the form of a tastefully executed dark chrome exterior signature cascading grille, Trio Beam LED Headlamps and Honeycomb Inspired LED Tail Lamps. The Surround View Monitor (SVM) with 360° Camera and Blind View Monitor (BVM) help keep this fortress on wheels out of harm's way while safety features like six airbags, electronic stability control, disc brakes act as a royal army that stays alert round the clock to keep occupants safe.

## LUXURIOUS LIKE A PALACE

Hyundai Alcazar's cabin greets you with palatial opulence with its Premium Dual-Tone Cognac Brown interiors coupled with 64 Colours Ambient Lighting and modern features that pamper its occupants like kings and queens. Alcazar owners get the royal treatment they deserve with amenities like Front row Seatback Table with retractable cup holder & IT device holder, Rear Window Sunshade and Smartphone Wireless Charger ensuring the owner is always the centre of attention.

## SPACIOUS LIKE A FORTRESS

The luxurious cabin is complemented rather well by the generous amount of space on offer that is amplified by the large Voice Enabled Smart Panoramic Sunroof. With a choice of Captain and 60:40 Split Seats in the second row along with convenient Second Row One Touch Tip and Tumble Seats and a generous 50:50 Split Fold third row seat, the Alcazar ensures there is space for everyone in spades.

## COMFORTABLE LIKE A PALACE

The Hyundai Alcazar affords occupants palatial levels of comfort with an exhaustive list of features including well cushioned, perfectly bolstered seats all around and takes it a step further with a an automatic climate control, Front Row Ventilated Seats and air conditioning vents for all three rows along third row AC vents with speed control. To top it all off, the Alcazar also gets an integrated Auto Healthy Air Purifier that protects from air pollutants, keeping the cabin fragrant and healthy.

## PERFORMANCE FIT FOR ROYALTY

Taking the ethos of a fortress a step further is a set of engine and transmission options that include a powerful 2.0 l Petrol MPi Engine and a frugal 1.5 l Diesel CRDi Engine both available with the convenience of a 6-speed automatic transmission. With the Alcazar, Hyundai has created an SUV that exudes grace, strength and luxury that's fit for royalty.

6 and 7 seater options for comfortable seating with a choice of second row captain seats or 60:40 split seats and 50:50 split fold third row

## Signature Style

The Ferrari Roma has formally been launched in India as the Prancing Horse's entry-level offering. Among its most captivating aspects is its styling—Ferrari describes it as "signature Italian styling, a reinterpretation of the carefree lifestyle of '50s and '60s Rome." (That also happens to be the logic behind its name.)

Ahead of the cabin sits a 3.9-litre turbocharged V8 engine, producing 620bhp of max power and 760Nm of peak torque. The Roma can do 0-100 kmph in 3.4 seconds and 0-200 kmph in 9.3 seconds, and has a top speed of a little over 320 kmph.

The Roma is priced starting at Rs 3.76 crore (ex-showroom)—but that's the vanilla version. That number will rise significantly once you start personalising it.

# A star fit for a star

The all-new Mercedes-Benz A-Class Limousine is the stepping stone into the world of the three-pointed star with uncompromising levels of luxury, technology and performance that's fit for stars

An entry into the enchanting and highly desirable world of the foremost name in luxury, the Mercedes-Benz A-Class stays true to the ethos that have helped establish three-pointed stars as the chariots of choice for those who appreciate the finer things in life.

With styling in the same vein as its elder siblings like the stunning Mercedes-Benz CLS and stately Mercedes-Benz E-Class, the A-Class cuts a head-turning figure that is equal parts sporty and elegant thanks to its low-set nose and pleasing proportions. Adding oomph to the design are standard all-LED headlights and LED tail lights along with eye-catching 17-inch alloy wheels. That's not all, as the A-Class Limousine also happens to be the most aerodynamic production car in the world with a drag coefficient of 0.22.

Inside, the A-Class Limousine fuses luxury and technology in a way only a Mercedes-Benz can with cutting-edge twin 10.25-inch displays, one that acts as a configurable instrument panel while the other is a touch-enabled interface for infotainment functions. The instrument panel can be configured as per the user's liking and features multiple display themes. For accessing all of the functions of the infotainment setup one can use the touchpads on the steering wheel, the touchpad in the centre console

**With its striking exterior and pleasing proportions, the A-Class is bound to turn heads wherever it goes**

**Offered in both petrol and diesel variants, the A-Class Limousine serves up performance and efficiency with ease. Mercedes-Benz has created an interior that perfectly integrates luxury and technology with premium upholstery and trim appointments and an endless list of cutting-edge features**

or the touchscreen itself and voice commands as well. The turbine-style aircon vents look quite cool and with plenty of leather and soft-touch surfaces, the cabin exudes a sense of luxury befitting a Mercedes-Benz. A-Class Limousine's exhaustive list of luxury features includes electrically adjustable front seats with memory function for both, 64-colour ambient lighting setup, a wireless charger, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto support as well. There are seven airbags to keep occupants safe and front collision detection with auto braking function on offer too. As is the case with all new Mercedes-Benz models, you get the latest MBUX setup and an AI-based assistant that wakes up when you say "Hey Mercedes". Additionally, the Mercedes me connect app enables Alexa and Google Home integration so, in case you've got one of those devices at home you can ask questions about the car's whereabouts, fuel range and a whole lot more. Its performance can plaster a smile across your face with a powerful petrol engine and a torque-rich diesel mill, both available with responsive, quick-shifting automatic gearboxes. There are paddle shifters on offer so one can always take manual control over gear changes and get the most out of every drive. If you wish to lounge in the back, the A-Class Limousine will pamper you with comfort and luxury like no other. The Mercedes-Benz A-Class Limousine is the perfect stepping-stone into the opulent world of the three-pointed star blending eye-catching looks, luxury, technology and performance in a way only a Mercedes-Benz can.

AP102 / TC / 1572

# SLIPPERY WHEN WET

## IT IS THAT TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN CONDITIONS BECOME TREACHEROUS. HERE'S HOW TO STAY SAFE

**The monsoons are** upon us. While the rain cools the summer temperatures, it can wreak havoc on your car. You have no control over the rains, but taking care of your car in the monsoons is in your hands. Modern cars are made up of thousands of components and any part can fail. Water, humidity and moisture spell can spell trouble for the car's electrical system and metal ware. A breakdown at best could mean some discomfort, at worst it can create a hazardous situation. While a breakdown is far from welcome at any time of the year, the consequences of a minor fault can get magnified during the monsoons. A complete check-up and servicing at the onset of the season is highly advisable. Here's a list of the top things to look out for if you want to keep your car out of trouble.

### TYRE CONDITION

Tyres are the only point of contact with the road, hence, it's important to make sure that the tyres are in good conditions. The tyre tread helps in clearing water away from the road so that they have a better contact with the surface. So the depth of the tread must be good or else they might skid. The minimum depth is 2.5 mm of tread, but replace the tyres if they are old or worn out. Don't forget to check the spare tyre as well.

### CHECK THE BRAKES

Brake callipers are a crucial part of the car. You should regularly clean them to keep it dirt-free. Brakes should not be too tight or spongy. It's a good idea to get the brakes serviced before the start of the monsoon season. If necessary, get the drums, discs and pads replaced so that they perform at their optimum best.

### WIPER AND WASHER CONDITION

The windscreen wiper blades are important components of your car that should be in good condition. Ideally, one should replace the wiper blades every year before the monsoons begin. Ensure that the rubber is not hard and does not have cracks as it could scratch the windscreen. Also check if the wiper is working well at different speeds. Make sure the windshield washer bottle is filled up. You can add a mild detergent, which will keep the glass clean and oil-free. Check if the spray from the nozzles are directly hitting the windscreen.

### CABIN CARE

During this period it's normal for people to enter the car's cabin with drenched clothes and wet shoes. This leads to moisture build-up inside the cabin, which leaves a foul, musty smell. The dirty rubber mats could turn into breeding grounds for fungus. Also, the wet soles of shoes become prone to slipping off the pedals, which can be dangerous. A layer of newspaper in the footwell of the car can be helpful in absorbing the moisture from your shoes and the mats. It will also prevent dirt from your shoes getting transferred on to the carpets or mats.

### PROTECT THE CAR

Protect the car's body from rain by using a good wax polish. This will protect the paint and improve beading of water molecules. Grease the door locks and components under the car such as gear linkage, propeller shaft, etc. To prevent rusting of the exposed underbody, get an anti-rust treatment done.

### DRIVING IN STAGNANT WATER

Most people make the cardinal mistake of rushing through a stagnant pool of water. If you try to drive through a standing pool of water at high speed, it creates a bigger splash increasing the chances of water entering the engine through the air intake. This can cause serious damage to the engine resulting in hefty repair bills.

The sensible thing to do is follow the path taken by the car ahead as it will give you an idea of what lies ahead. The ideal way of wading through is to put the car in first gear and accelerate gently maintaining a constant speed. Allowing the revs to drop will result in water entering the exhaust. Attempt to cross only if the water level is six inches below the air inlet and the tailpipe. After crossing the watery patch, rev the engine a bit so that any water that might have entered the tailpipe gets expelled. If you feel water has entered the engine, switch off ignition instantly.

Brakes too lose bite when brake pads and shoes get wet. This happens because water acts as a lubricant, reducing the amount of bite. To dry the brakes look for an empty patch of road and brake hard to expel any water that might be trapped between the disc and brake pads. If you feel your car is aquaplaning, remember not to panic. Lift your foot off the throttle gently and press the brakes lightly.

Ensure you carry a warning triangle, a spare set of light bulbs, fuses, a tow rope and an umbrella. An umbrella might seem like an odd piece of kit, but it will be very handy in you need to step out of the car to fix any problems. ■

## MONSOON DRIVE: THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

**1. Use the demister when the screens fog up. 2. Newspapers come in handy to clean windshield, or keep them in footwell to absorb moisture and dirt 3. Check the wiper blades before the start of the rainy season. If they are hard or brittle, replace them 4. Top up windshield wiper fluid**

# RIDE THE RAIN

SUZUKI
SUZUKI

**1.** Clean your exhaust regularly as mud can damage the metal bend pipe **2.** Brake discs can develop rust due to water. Spray WD-40 **3.** Use a one rupee coin to measure tread depth. Insert the coin into the tread with the year stamping upright. End of the tread should cut the year marking in half **4.** Chain drive should be greased properly

**It's no secret that the monsoons** are a trying season for motorcyclists. Here's how to survive and enjoy the assault of the rains on two wheels.

### STOPPING TROUBLE

When it rains, water on the callipers makes the brakes lose their bite due to reduction in friction. To keep friction going, ensure that brake fluid is topped up and brake pads are in good condition. Tighten drum brakes to get better bite. Use water repellents like WD-40, which also protect metallic surfaces from rust. Don't use rear brake as the primary brake. Using the front brake keeps the motorcycle stable while the rear brake, especially when it is wet, can cause motorcycle's back end to slide.

### TRACTION PROBLEM

When rain water, especially drizzle mixes with the dust on the road, the result is grime. It is dark, disgusting and slippery. One way to ensure a safe ride is to ensure your tyres are in good condition. Make sure that the treads on the tyre shoulder and the middle are 2-3 mm deep. Also, run with lower tyre pressure as it provides more contact patch for the tyre, increasing traction. The recommended pressure hovers around 29-34 psi. You can run up to 2-3 psi less to get maximum traction.

### DON'T BE A DAREDEVIL

Always go 20-25 kmph slower than you normally would under dry conditions. In case of pouring rain, keep your headlights on as it makes you visible. If water levels are over two feet, get off motorcycle and navigate on foot. If you feel you can cross the area on the motorcycle, make sure you are in a lower gear and at a constant speed. If you stall in the middle and your tailpipe is submerged, do not crank the engine as it will get flooded resulting in a seized engine and a huge service bill. ■

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## DARK IS IN

Despite the riot of colours that cars come in these days, black has always been a favourite shade among buyers. Now, automakers are trying to cash in on the fetish for black by launching 'Dark' themed vehicles. Tata Motors has been among the first to do so, recently unveiled its 'Dark' range across the Altroz, Nexon and Harrier. All three vehicles come in special shades of black and get some tweaks inside.

BMW recently launched the Dark Shadow edition for its top-of-the-line X7 M50d. The SUV, priced at Rs 2.02 crore, ex-showroom Delhi, comes with added bells and whistles and a shade of black that the company calls Frozen Arctic Grey. The additional equipment supplied include BMW's laserlight headlamps, sky lounge panoramic sunroof (which features 15,000 LEDs and lights up in the colour of the ambient lighting), front seats with active ventilation, five-zone climate control, soft-close doors, 360-degree camera and tyre pressure monitoring system.

## HYUNDAI HITS THE 10 MILLION MARK

Hyundai Motor India, in June, rolled out its 10 millionth car from its manufacturing facility near Chennai. With this, the company has become the fastest automaker in the country to achieve the feat. The 10 millionth vehicle was a Hyundai Alcazar. It came out of the production line in the presence of Hyundai Motor India MD & CEO S.S. Kim and Tamil Nadu chief minister M.K. Stalin.

The Hyundai plant near Chennai has an installed capacity of 750,000 units a year. The milestone of one million units was attained in 2006; since then, Hyundai has been gradually scaling up its production. It hit three million units in 2010, six million in 2015 and nine million in 2019.

## VINTAGE BADGE FOR YOUR CAR

India's vehicle scrappage policy continues to get updates. It has been announced that vehicles over 50 years old will be deemed 'vintage' and re-registration will be allowed. The vehicles cannot be used on a daily basis but only on special occasions or for maintenance. Owners have the choice of getting new registration numbers, which will feature the 'VA' tag to give them their vintage identity. The old registration numbers can also be retained, if one so desires. The Union ministry of road transport & highways has invited suggestions from the public on the proposed rules for registering vintage vehicles.

## INDIA'S LONGEST HIGH-SPEED TEST TRACK

In June the country got its longest high-speed track, in Pithampur near Indore. The track, spread over 1,000 acres, has been developed by the National Automotive Test Tracks. At 11.3 km, the track is the fifth longest in the world. It is oval-shaped and comes with four lanes, where vehicles will be able to achieve speeds of up to 375 kmph. The premises also offers facilities for testing braking, mileage, handling and acceleration. ■

# TECHNOLOGY THAT POWERS LIVES

PEOPLE TECHNOLOGY

For Maruti Suzuki, human lives form both the core of their inspiration, and the foundation of their approach to innovation. With their technological interventions, Maruti Suzuki strives to make a true, noticeable difference that empowers and enhances the lives of people from all over the country and this, is what they call People Technology.

Every new technology introduced by Maruti Suzuki is the result of years of research and hard work, all focused at ensuring a positive, tangible difference in the lives of the people who choose to put their trust in them.

Spearheading revolution since its inception, Maruti Suzuki celebrates innovations and technologies that delight its customers. The Company's focus is to offer Safe, Environment friendly, Comfortable and Connected Technologies to Indian customers. Maruti Suzuki not only provides advanced technologies in its vehicles but strives to provide the technology offerings at competitive prices. The seven recent path-breaking technologies being communicated depicts the Company's above-mentioned approach.

## 1. SAFETY

The R&D team at Suzuki Motor Corporation, Japan has developed a next-generation global platform 'HEARTECT Platform' that is designed with a core focus on safety. Built with advanced and high tensile steel, the platform has a smooth continuous design for better impact absorption in case of a collision. At the same time, it offers better stability and control for enhanced driving performance and fuel efficiency. The platform is adopted in all future generation cars globally including cars developed for India. Maruti Suzuki is committed to offer safer cars to its consumers. In view of this objective, the Company took initiatives to upgrade its entire range of vehicles to meet crash and pedestrian regulations much ahead of the defined timeframe.

The Government of India mandated certain additional regulations such as driver airbags, ABS, Rear parking sensor, seat belt reminder and speed alert system from 2019 apart from crash and pedestrian norms. These regulations are unique for India. All Maruti Suzuki models comply with all these regulations by offering technologies which are valued by consumers.

## 2. ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY

With the vision to democratize green mobility for its customers, Maruti Suzuki unveiled its 'Mission Green Million' in 2020. Having already sold one million green vehicles, the Company aims to sell the next million green vehicles at a much faster pace and reduce its carbon footprint.

In view of this objective, the Company has taken various initiatives such as upgrading current K-Series engines, the addition of S-CNG technology and the introduction of Smart Hybrid technology in more models. With the above initiatives aimed at continuous improvement, the Company has achieved nearly 20% weighted CO2 reduction across the fleet in the past 15 years.

## 3. COMFORT AND CONVIENENCE

Maruti Suzuki has sold more than 7.5 lakh vehicles with a range of Automatic Transmissions. The Company democratized the two-pedal technology and challenged several myths related to automatic cars with the launch of Auto Gear Shift (AGS) technology in 2014. Currently, Maruti Suzuki offers three different types of two-pedal transmissions including AT, AGS and Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) on its 12 models. The options are available in each segment to meet the needs of customers.

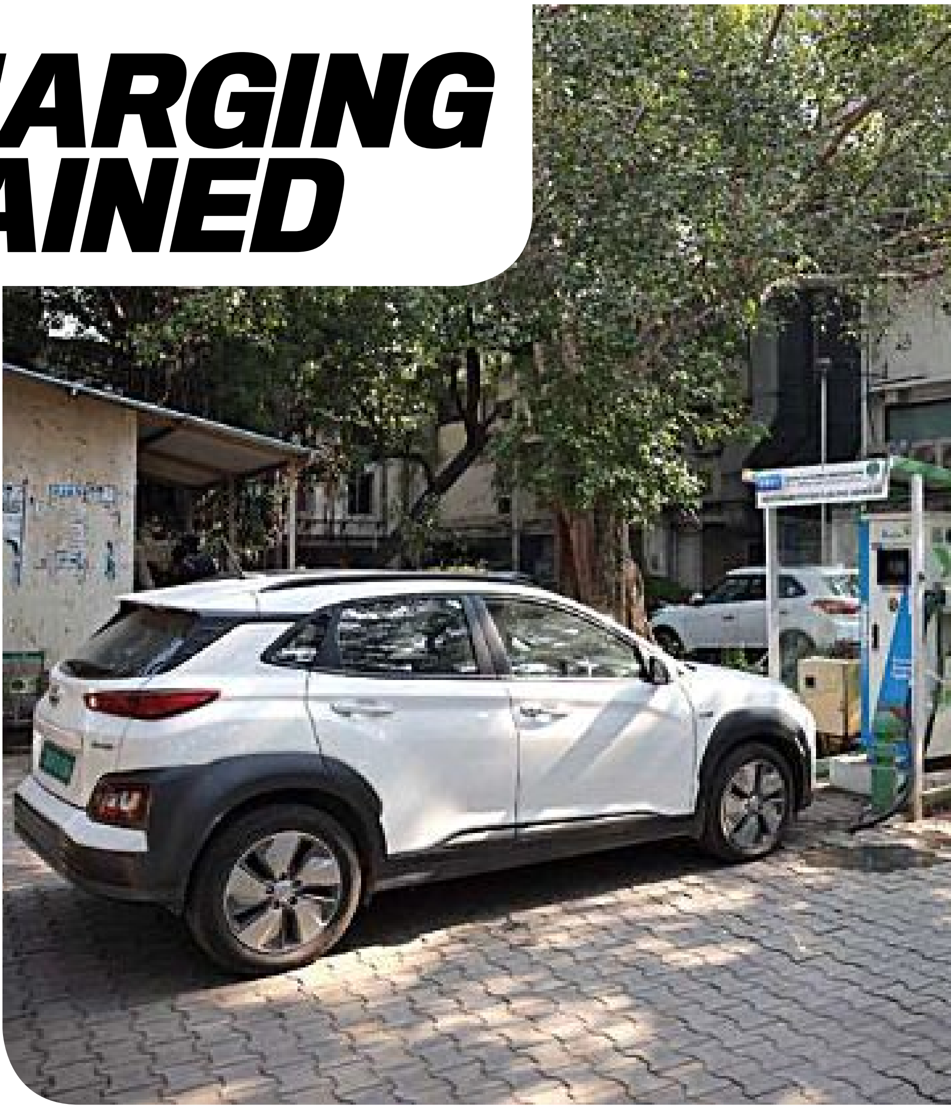
The next-generation SmartPlay Studio Infotainment system has been introduced across the Maruti Suzuki product portfolio to offer the next level of infotainment experience to the Indian consumers. It is a new-age 17.78 cm (7") connected touch screen infotainment system that connects smartphone, vehicle and cloud-based services to provide a host of features to offer delightful driving experience.

## 4. CONNECTED CAR

In today's world, it is very important to stay connected as it provides reassurance, a sense of safety, and peace of mind. To keep one always connected, Maruti Suzuki offers Suzuki Connect, a Telematics Control Unit (TCU) solution available in Maruti Suzuki cars. It provides advanced features such as vehicle tracking, emergency alert, driving behaviour analysis, live vehicle statistics, vehicle and alerts, among others.

# EV CHARGING EXPLAINED

**DIPAYAN DUTTA** *UNPACKS THE NUANCES OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING*



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**Time-efficient charging** is the cornerstone of practicality for an electric vehicle. As electric vehicles continue to evolve in pursuit of becoming the default mobility solution of the masses, it's important that we understand the various technologies so that we can make better-informed decisions with regards to the vehicles that we are interested in. Broadly speaking, a good rule of thumb to keep in mind is that DC (Direct Current) charging technology is the faster charger, AC charging is relatively slower. Now AC charging is further subdivided into Level 1 chargers, the kind that works on a 15A wall socket and Level 2 charging that usually comes through an AC charging box that comes with the electric car. DC fast charging is broadly categorised as Level 3 chargers, although their speed is dictated by the voltage they produce.

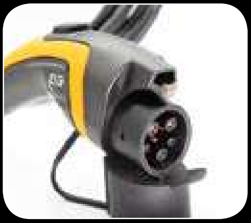
The next most important thing to know is the kWh rating for your car's lithium-ion battery. The higher the number, the more charge that your car can store and therefore, the more range it can offer. Like in an ICE engine, factors like power, torque of the motor and weight of the vehicle do factor into how efficiently that vehicle uses the energy available to it.

Now that we know what to look for before we buy an EV, let's take a closer look at some of the charging technologies available to us.

### AC CHARGING

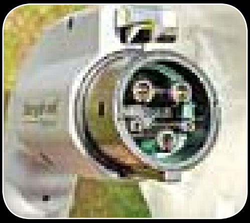
In this case, the car receives AC current and converts it to DC through an onboard inverter to charge the batteries. Level 1 chargers use 15A wall sockets and usually take overnight charges of up to 12 hours or more to fully charge the battery. Level 2 chargers that come with the car and can be installed in your home are relatively faster, offering up to 20kWh. Depending on the size of your battery, this could take anywhere between 2-4 hours to recover 100 per cent of the available range.

## AC CHARGE SOCKETS



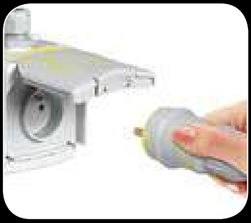
**YAZAKI SOCKET-JSAE 1772**

- 7.4 kw-31 Amps Single phase
- Japan and USA



**MENNEKES SOCKET**

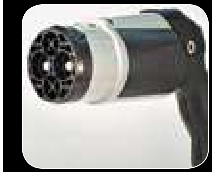
- 44 kw-63 Amps Three phase
- Europe / Germany



**LE-GRAND SOCKET**

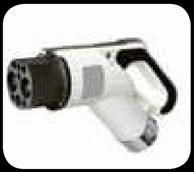
- 22 kw-32 Amps Three phase
- France and Italy

## DC CHARGE SOCKETS



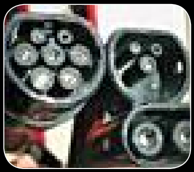
**CHAdeMO**

- 400 kw-1000v-400A
- CAN protocol
- Japan/ Korea
- Nissan Leaf, Kia, Mitsubishi



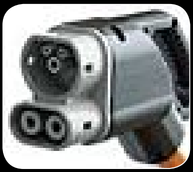
**GB/T**

- 237.5 kw-950v-250A
- CAN protocol
- China/ India
- Mahindra, Chinese electric vehicle



**Tesla Supercharger**

- 135 kw-410v-330A
- CAN protocol
- Tesla charging stations
- Tesla S, Tesla 3



**CCS2 Fast charger**

- Upto 250 kw
- 5 point, level 2 port
- Globally accepted

### DC CHARGING

Level 3 or DCFC electric vehicle charging uses DC charge to directly charge the battery, bypassing the onboard inverter. This allows for not only a much higher rate of charge but also reduces the charging time exponentially. The most common DC charging port is the CCS 2 port that can be fitted to any electric vehicle with a 7-pin standard level 2 port. CHAdeMO ports and Tesla's level 2 port supercharger are the only exceptions to this type.

*AN IMPORTANT THING TO KEEP IN MIND IS THE KWH RATING FOR YOUR CAR'S LITHIUM-ION BATTERY. THE HIGHER THE NUMBER, THE MORE CHARGE THAT YOUR CAR CAN STORE AND THEREFORE, THE MORE RANGE IT CAN OFFER*

### WIRELESS CHARGING

The most uncommon type, for obvious reasons. In this type of charger, the system uses electromagnetic waves to charge the car's battery wirelessly. This is usually done using a charging pad that plugs into an AC wall socket. Mostly, this tech is an R&D exercise, but some cars have sport level 2 wireless charging capabilities that can provide up to 11 kWh of charge. It may still be a while before we see this technology in the mainstream though. ■

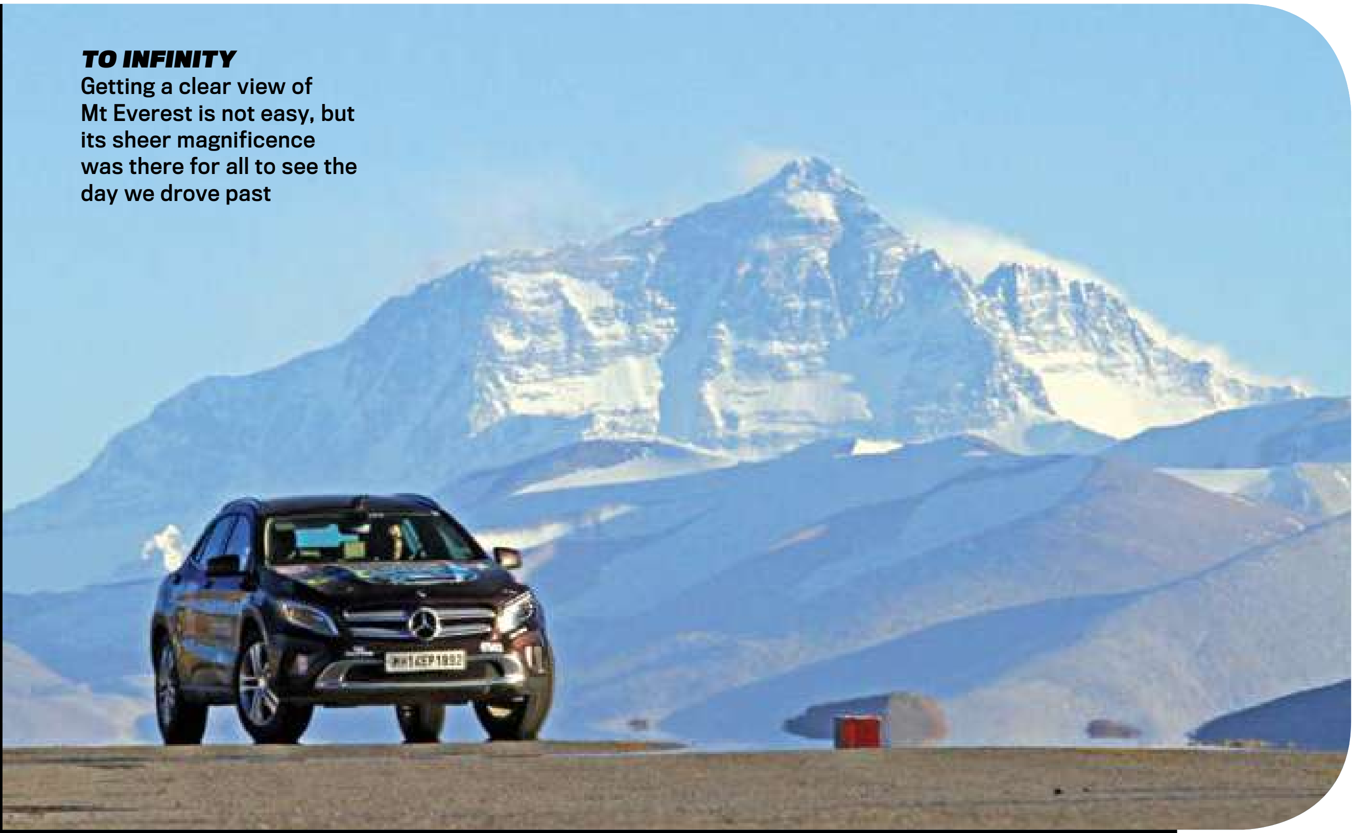
# THE GREAT OVERLAND ADVENTURE

### RELIVING A JOURNEY WITH A MERCEDES-BENZ GLA ALL THE WAY FROM THE COMPANY'S HQ IN STUTTGART, GERMANY, TO ITS MANUFACTURING FACILITY IN PUNE

About 6 years ago we embarked on the longest, biggest and the most challenging drive of all when we decided to drive from Stuttgart to Pune; from the German headquarters of Mercedes-Benz to their Indian headquarters. It was also the first time that an Indian auto magazine had done an inter-continental drive. What we got and brought for our readers was an adventure of a lifetime. No airlifting cars from one point to another, no oceans to cross, just about 18,000 km of roads and tracks ahead of us, including some of the harshest terrain found anywhere in the world. It was day after day of endless driving, reaching a town late at night, getting up early in the morning to do some photography around town and then on to the next planned stop for the night. It was not easy going at all—the border crossings were a challenge and we had six of them, the Himalayas stood in our path as did the freezing temperatures of Siberian Russia. The drive went flawlessly and we were back in office on schedule, not coming to terms with the feat, thinking if it as just a dream.

A lot has changed since then. Some people from my team have moved on to other roles while others both in the team and other organisations who were involved with the drive now sport different designations. I am still the same and driving adventures are in my blood and while I have been bound to my armchair during the Coronavirus pandemic, I wanted to share the story of the drive that still brings joy to my heart and a smile to my face. We really did pull it off! Hoping that we will all be able to get back on the road again, very soon! ■

**–Yogendra Pratap**



**TO INFINITY**
Getting a clear view of Mt Everest is not easy, but its sheer magnificence was there for all to see the day we drove past

# L URE

PARESH RAWAL:
A BIT OF EVERYTHING
PG 114

DEPINDER CHIBBER:
BRINGING *PAKORAS*
TO THE TABLE PG 118

THE ART OF
DARKNESS
PG 116

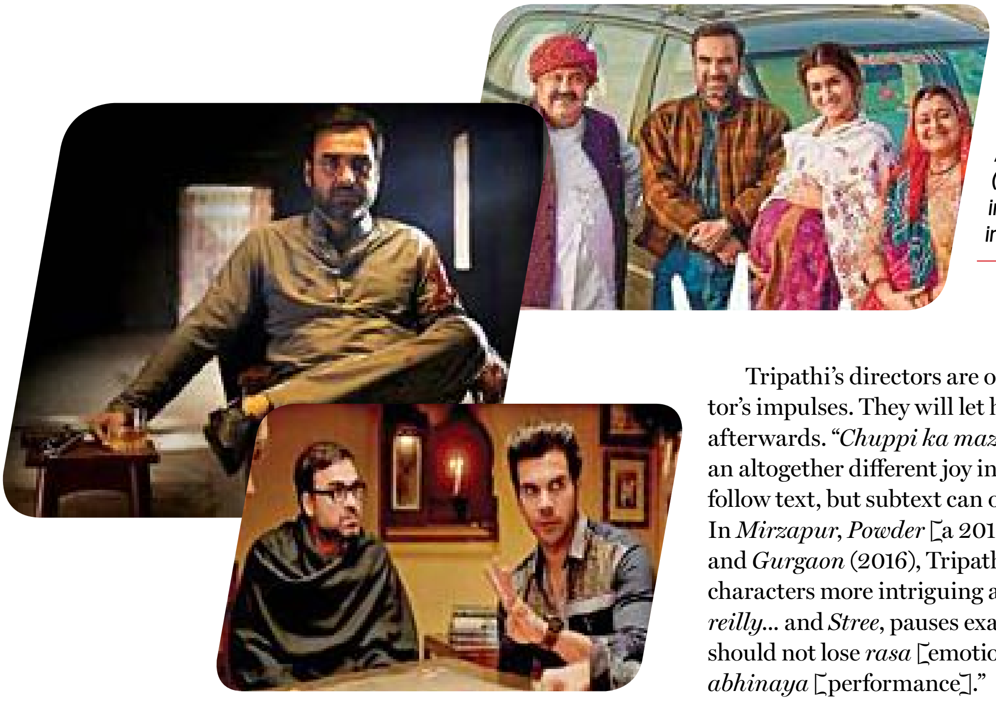
Q&A WITH
SANIA MIRZA
PG 120

The **PANKAJ TRIPATHI** starrer, Mimi, a surrogacy-based comedy drama, will release on Netflix and JioCinema on July 30

FILMS

# FOR A GOOD PAUSE

EVEN THOUGH HE IS SET TO CHARM US AGAIN WITH A NEW FILM, **PANKAJ TRIPATHI** SAYS HE IS STOPPING TO BREATHE



**AN ACTOR'S ACTOR**
*(from top) Pankaj Tripathi in Mimi; in Mirzapur; and in Stree*

Pankaj Tripathi is today a household name, but long before his memorable performances in web shows—Kaleen Bhaiyya in *Mirzapur* (2018—), Madhav Mishra in *Criminal Justice* (2019—)—and those beloved parts in films like *Bareilly Ki Barfi!* (2017) and *Stree* (2018), it was easy to overlook his talent. In earlier films like *Gunday* (2014), *Singham Returns* (2014) and *Dilwale* (2015), you would have missed him if you blinked. He says he did these movies out of need but also out of desire.

Well-etched roles, the National School of Drama graduate knew, would not come his way quickly. "I hadn't come [to Mumbai] with a plan. I didn't know what I wanted to do, so I wasn't choosy," says Tripathi. "If I was getting a role which allowed me to pay rent or if I got to go to another city and do some work, it was better than sitting at home." Tripathi recalls the *Gunday* scene in which his character dies. "I was shot, so I fell quickly to the ground, like how one does in real life," he says. "Ali [Abbas Zafar, director] told me to first drop to my knees. 'Theatre *chhod* and realism *mein mat ghus* [forget theatre and realism].'" For Tripathi, this was an education. For instance, he first learned about high-speed shots during *Gunday*. "*Dimaag ka antenna khula rakhoge, toh* you'll learn a lot."

Tripathi is an observant actor. He watches life, though, not films. "I have seen and heard so many things that I forget what I have imagined and what I actually observed," he says. This practice of being inspired by real, fascinating individuals and past encounters is a method he uses to give his characters a memorable touch. In *Mimi*, a surrogacy-based comedy drama, set to release on Netflix and JioCinema on July 30, his character often says the same line or word twice, offering different meanings each time. Tripathi says that this is his ode to a man he knew in Belsand, his ancestral village in Bihar.

**His method of being inspired by real individuals and past encounters is what gives Pankaj Tripathi's characters a memorable touch**

Tripathi's directors are only happy to indulge the actor's impulses. They will let him pause in between lines or afterwards. "*Chuppi ka mazaa kuchh aur hai* [There is an altogether different joy in silence]," he says. "We all can follow text, but subtext can only be found through pauses." In *Mirzapur*, *Powder* [a 2010 TV show, now on Netflix] and *Gurgaon* (2016), Tripathi uses the pause to make his characters more intriguing and foreboding, while in *Bareilly...* and *Stree*, pauses exaggerate his comic timing. "We should not lose *rasa* [emotion] in the quest for realistic *abhinaya* [performance]."

Tripathi's career can be divided in two halves: pre- and post-2017. Though he had charmed audiences in *Masaan* (2015) and *Nil Battey Sannata* (2015), it was with *Newton* (2017) that Tripathi finally broke out. Given how long he had waited, Tripathi found it hard to say no when the offers began to pour in. "*Bhookh dabke lagegi, toh overeating ho hi jaati hai* [When you are very hungry, you do tend to overeat]," he says. Working at a breakneck speed, he shuttled from one project to another between 2018 and March 2020.

The hyper-productivity, though, took a toll on his health. "I may not have been creatively burnt out, but was on the verge of a mental burnout," he says. The actor constantly felt tired, even ending up in the hospital once. His experience on stage, though, ensured that despite the surfeit of work, his limitations as an actor weren't exposed. "You develop another level of focus," he says. "To meditate, one doesn't need to go to the Himalayas. The challenge is to do it in the middle of a busy *chauraha* [crossing]."

The Covid pandemic gave Tripathi the break he needed. In the past 16 months, he has seen a number of his web shows and films release: *Mirzapur*, *Criminal Justice*, *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*, *Ludo*, *Shakeela* (2020) and *Kaagaz* (2021). After *Mimi*, there's *'83* in which he plays the manager of the 1983 World Cup-winning cricket team. Tripathi, for his part, says he has been trying hard to lie low. He has watched just four films, spending his time, instead, reading Hindi literature and making the most of the sylvan surroundings of his Madh Island home in Mumbai.

The wisdom he has gained, says Tripathi, makes him sound like a spiritual speaker: "Life is very fragile. Don't hold grudges. We should be able to forgive. We will all leave empty-handed." With this awareness, the workaholic actor shot for just three weeks this year. "There's no urgency," he says. "There's contentment." ■

**–Suhani Singh**

INTERVIEW

# A BIT OF EVERYTHING

A boxing coach in *Toofan*, an insecure husband in *Hungama 2*—at age 66, **Paresh Rawal** has learnt to find a balance between roles that scare him and those that reunite him with his favourite directors. The actor has announced his return to Gujarati cinema and stepped into *Sharmaji Namkeen* after Rishi Kapoor's untimely demise.

**What was it about *Toofan* that caught your attention?**
Being a boxing coach was interesting, but the core of this character was very appealing. The layers are very slowly peeled through the film—how he reconciles to his fate or to the situation around him. I wanted to work with Rakeysh Mehra because he takes so many pains to treat the subject delicately. I have also always been fascinated by Farhan (Akhtar) and his passion.

**Were you ever interested in boxing as a sport?**
I was kind of interested, but it's quite a brutal sport for my nature. I get a little sick in the stomach when I hear that thudding sound. I have seen boxers getting dementia in their old age because of the constant beating they take in the head.

**Another film that you've completed is *Sharmaji Namkeen*...**
Yes, it was so sad Rishi Kapoor couldn't finish that film, because *Sharmaji Namkeen* has a beautiful script and the audience would have seen him in a very different role. I really salute the producers for wanting to complete the film in such a unique manner, else a good script would have been lost.

**You also have Priyadarshan's *Hungama 2* releasing. Considering the number of films you have made together, is it understood that you will do any film he approaches you for?**
No, I would want to see the story and the role. But even if there's something I don't like about it, I know that Priyanji, being who he is, will take care of it and that the end result will be a good, entertaining film. Although he's made films like *Kanchivaram* and *Marakkar*, which was the most expensive Malayalam film ever, he's not pretentious. It's always a joy to work with someone so honest.

**You are returning to Gujarati films after almost 40 years!**
Yes, the film is based on *Dear Father*, a play that I have performed over 400 shows of all over the world. It's a beautiful story—an emotional thriller through which you evaluate relationships within a family.

**While Gujarati theatre is very vibrant, the film industry there hasn't grown as much. As someone who is from there, what do you think needs to change?**
There is a very vibrant Gujarati theatre scene in the Middle East, Africa, America, the UK. Unfortunately, it hasn't translated to cinema. Hopefully, the younger generation of filmmakers will take advantage of the ready audience.

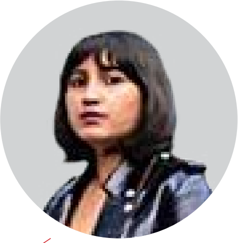
For **PARESH RAWAL**, the core of his character, a boxing coach, in *Toofaan* was very appealing

**—with Karishma Upadhyay**

**CONTENTIOUS** Photographs by Poulomi Basu (bottom) collected in *Centralia*

PHOTOGRAPHY

# The Art of Darkness



*When photographer **Poulomi Basu** visited Naxal-affected areas, she found both beauty and violence*

A man fervidly beats a drum. A woman with a gun looks directly at the camera. A stream of flames illuminates a dark forest path. In Poulomi Basu's photos from Naxal conflict-regions, light and dark, war and domesticity meld in unexpected, haunting ways. These vignettes on the decades-long armed rebellion are collected in *Centralia*—shortlisted last year as one of four nominees for the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize. The winner of the £30,000 (Rs 30.8 lakh) award will be announced in September. The photos and a short film, *Ghost Dance*, are presently on display in London at the Photographers' Gallery.

Basu, a trans-media artist, activist and photographer, describes her genre as "para fiction"—an interplay of real lives, dreamscapes and nature documenting a complex and multi-faceted conflict. "I felt this is a more powerful way to tell this story since truth is extremely contested in this area," she says on the phone from London. "Whose truth is the ultimate truth? I decided to use all the perspectives and a collision between them to let audiences figure it out."

Basu began visiting the Naxal-affected districts of central India in 2010 and photographed the landscape and people over eight years. The images have a raw, rich intimacy thrumming with many of the themes that animate Basu's work: ecological ruin, women and violence. "All my work is contentious," she says. "For me, it's important that the lightness of something goes with the darkness because that's what life is."

"Centralia" is itself a reference to a Pennsylvania town, which native American groups gave up for a pittance to settlers in the 18th century. It later became a coal mining hotspot. Central and eastern India, with their rich mineral resources, have similarly been a battleground between the state, corporate interests and indigenous groups. "Politically, it's a Maoist insurgency, but it's also an environmental justice story," says Basu. "It was important for me to put it in a global context."

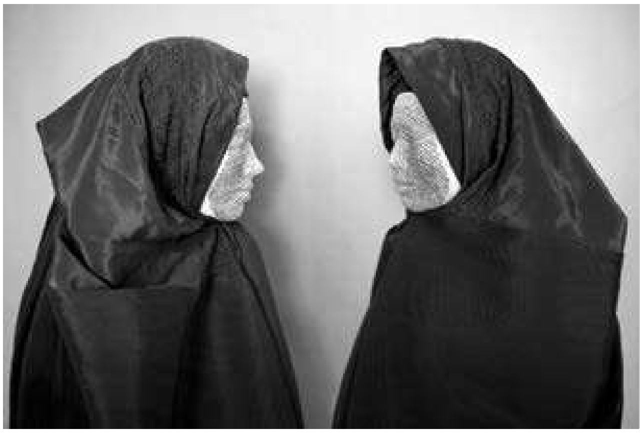
*Centralia* also has voices of female revolutionaries, activists and locals and uses family photos from abandoned studios which offer a striking contrast to the apocalyptic scenes of Basu's narrative. "I decided I can't be the moral arbiter of this story," she says.

Basu has also worked as a photojournalist but was drawn to art and film. "I believe in long-form storytelling. You have time and space to do justice to your story, compared to being a photojournalist, where the life cycle of the piece is a week or day and then it is gone." ■

**—Bhavya Dore**

# COURAGE UNDER TALIBAN FIRE

As Afghan photographer **Rada Akbar** looks for refuge, she has found for her art a safe space online



Being a photographer in Afghanistan has never been easy, but until last year, Rada Akbar, 33, it seemed, was beating the odds. *Abarzanan* (Superwomen), a project she had begun in 2018, was the toast of Kabul. President Ashraf Ghani had given Akbar the keys to Darul Aman Palace for her International Women's Day exhibitions. In 2020, Akbar impressed all with her feminist storytelling. As inspiration, the visual artist had used the biographies of 10 strong, radical women.

“Interacting with the international community is frustrating,” says Akbar. “They look at Afghan women as one single package of victims. It's like we only came into being in 2001 and had no history or culture before that. Women have impacted Afghanistan for thousands of years. With *Abarzanan*, I wanted to honour their contribution.” In September, Akbar's hopes for a bright Afghan future started giving way to overwhelming fear. The Taliban had begun targeting journalists and activists, “anyone who was a threat to the extremists.”

Akbar, who has lived alone in a Kabul apartment ever since she was 23, remembers being scared for her life. “I received messages and calls from unknown numbers. Strangers would knock on my door at odd hours.” It was in February that the Indian Embassy in Kabul granted her an emergency visa. Having visited India over a dozen times, Delhi felt like home. “It took me a few days to just process all that trauma, but slowly, India helped me relax. I found some strength and with that, I returned to Kabul for *Abarzanan*.”

In her body of work titled Abarzanan, **RADA AKBAR** honours the contribution of Afghan women to their country

Even though Akbar's friends and security team advised against any sort of exhibition this year, Akbar was adamant. She decided to take *Abarzanan* online. “Because there would be no visitors, we lined the hall in Darul Aman Palace with chairs and on them we pasted pictures of all those who had been targeted and killed by the Taliban.” Watching the video of Akbar delivering her annual speech in an empty palace does, of course, accentuate Akbar's loneliness but it also highlights Afghanistan's present plight.

Akbar doesn't believe that Indian photojournalist Danish Siddiqui was simply caught in Taliban crossfire last week. “He was targeted because of his nationality. My first thought was that if they can do this to him, what will they do to us?” Akbar has now started looking for ways to leave: “It's devastating to have to leave your country only to survive, but it's my only option.” In the end, she points to the photos of children she posts on Instagram: “I feel we would all do better by focusing on this next generation.” ■

*Follow Rada Akbar's Abarzanan project on Abarzanan.com*

**–Shreevatsa Nevatia**

FOOD

# BRINGING *PAKORAS* TO THE TABLE

***MasterChef Australia*** **contestant Depinder Chibber has found a way into India's heart via our stomach**

Until mid-June, most viewers of *MasterChef Australia* (streaming on Disney+ Hotstar) were convinced that Depinder Chhibber, or Pindo as she is fondly known, would be at least one of the three finalists on the popular cooking show, if not the winner. Born in Delhi, Chhibber, who moved to Australia when she was 11, had won judges over by bringing quintessential Indian flavours and dishes into the *MasterChef* kitchen. The chickpea curry, *kadhai paneer*, *gobhi parantha* and grandmother's mustard pickle she made in the bento box challenge was praised as the "epitome of precision and perfection". Other dishes included *pakoras*, prawn *ghee* roast, fish Amritsari, a crayfish *kathi* roll, and tandoori chicken with smoked lassi. After peaking early, she had two bad days in the kitchen, and, finally, finished eighth on the show. That, however, doesn't change the fact that she is the only Season 13 contestant who has more than 83,600 followers on Instagram.

"Maintaining your confidence and the level of

## REALITY CHECK

**These six reality TV shows prove that fact can sometimes**

### Too Hot to Handle (2020–)(USA+UK)

The Netflix series puts eight gorgeous contestants (the Instagram kind) under one roof, asking them to abstain from physical intimacy for four weeks. There's a $100,000 cash prize to play for, but also fines for each 'misdemeanour'.

### The Big Flower Fight (2020–) (UK)

Modelled after *The Great British Bake Off*, this Netflix show encourages contestants to use real flowers to come up with floral designs and structures, ranging from giant insects and sea creatures to edible thrones. What is unique is how the show rewards high-art skills like sculpting and garden design.

### Queer Eye (2018–) (USA)

A wholesome reality show, this Netflix reboot features the 'Fab Five', a group of five queer experts who spruce up the lives of (usually) heterosexual men across the world. From grooming and house design to what they eat/ drink, the five make vital suggestions to contestants. *Queer Eye* has ensured a heart-warming LGBTQI representation, further bridging the gap with the mainstream.

expectation from judges and viewers is quite challenging," says Chhibber. "In hindsight, I would do a lot of things differently. You really need to shake those bad cook-offs. You have these crazy ideas and amazing dishes in your mind but they must fit the challenge." Chhibber's plans to give the *laal maans* a spin with a tortellini dish, make lamb *samosas*, *khandvi* and more desserts never quite panned out, but she is still glad she cooked "a few regional and home style dishes that you don't usually see on the show".

A pharmacist by profession, Chhibber had been playing with the idea of applying for *MasterChef* for years. "There were at least two to three occasions when I filled out the form but never finished or submitted it," she says. "I didn't think I could do the stuff that people did on the show." There was apprehension. Would the food that she had grown up eating pass muster with the judges? It did. Having proven herself on the show, Chhibber is keen to capitalise on the momentum. She has taken a break from her day job with a pharmaceutical company and local community pharmacy to do what she wants—work with food.

The pandemic further strengthened her resolve. "Covid has helped put things in perspective for people all over," says Chhibber, 29. "If you have the luxury to take a break from work and follow your passion, just go for it." A few times a week, she works in Three Blue Ducks in Sydney, a restaurant run by *MasterChef Australia* judge and chef Andy Allen. It's a necessary step to her ultimate dream—to open a small, "nothing crazy fancy" restaurant serving authentic Indian food. A cookbook is also in the works. And were it not for Covid, she'd also have travelled to India. "The love I'm getting online only becomes real when you experience it in person," she says. "There's so much I want to see and experience in India and learn from." ■

**—Suhani Singh**

## THE WIZARDS IN OZ

South Asians on the *MasterChef Australia* podium

**SASHI CHELIAH**

Winner of the 10th season, the Tamil-origin prison guard-turned-chef was one of the first to introduce powerful South Asian flavours and dishes—broths, curries and purees—to the MasterChef table

**JUSTIN NARAYAN**

Winner of Season 13, Narayan's cooking combined his Fijian and Indian heritage, giving us some great hits—cauliflower tacos, chicken curry, lentil curry with pickled onions and coriander chutney

**KISHWAR CHOWDHURY**

Finishing third in Season 13, the Bangladeshi-origin contestant impressed all with her Bengali dishes—the *panta bhaat*, in particular—and for her impeccable presentations on the plate

## be more fun than fiction

**Terrace House (2015-2016)** (Japan)

What happens when you bring together six men and women between the ages of 19 and 31, put them under one roof and let nature take its course? This Japanese reality show (on Netflix) is a refreshing reminder of how even the most mundane chores and conversations can be mined for 'interesting' content.

**Shark Tank (2009–)** (USA)

*Shark Tank* (on Voot) sees potential start-ups (usually) put their best foot forward in front of VCs, to secure funding for their idea. It's a great premise, where contestants hustle hard to showcase their 'innovations', while experienced business folk cut them to size.

**Wie is de Mol? / Who is the Mole? (1999–)** (The Netherlands)

One of the biggest hits on Dutch TV, the format of this show is rather intriguing. Ten contestants are asked to do certain tasks to earn money. It's the job of the 'mole' to ensure that most of the contestants fail. Given the machinations involved, it's not surprising that this show (on YouTube) recently wrapped up its 21st season.

**—Tatsam Mukherjee**

JOHN WALTON/ GETTY IMAGES

# ADVANTAGE, MIRZA

Going into her fourth Olympics, **Sania Mirza** has the kind of experience few other athletes do. Juggling sport and motherhood, the tennis champion only worries about what she can control

**Q. A lot has happened in the run-up to the Olympics–motherhood for you, a pandemic, lack of match practice. How do you see it being different?**
When I started playing tennis, I only dreamt of winning Grand Slams. It's amazing that today I am on the verge of equalling the Indian record for most appearances by a woman at the Olympics. Yes, travelling with a child during a pandemic in the run-up to the Olympics has not been easy. But one cannot worry about what is beyond one's control.

……

**Q. Your partner Ankita Raina is making her Olympic debut. Any advice for her?**
The opponents we play against at the Olympics will be among the best in the world. It will not be easy for Ankita to adjust quickly to this level. But she is a fighter and understands that we need to punch way above our weight to make our presence felt in Tokyo.

……

**Q. How has your training changed today as compared to, say, a decade ago?**
I focus more on fitness than on tennis after three decades of having played the game. The strokes come more easily to me than fitness at my age.

……

**Q. What is your son Izhaan's favourite game these days?**
He loves football more than tennis or cricket right now. But this can quickly change!

**–with Shail Desai**

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THE GOOD LIFE
# SPICE
INDIA TODAY
JULY 2021

WATCH SPECIAL

# What a Time!

THE FINEST TIMEPIECES OF 2021

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**PERHAPS IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE THAT** clocks, particularly grandfather clocks, have made a huge comeback as collectibles and objects of desire. Time, after all, has become the most leveraged asset in the past 16 months. Now a joint venture between French architect turned watch designer Alain Silberstein and a French clockmaker Utinam has yielded a quirky, Bauhaus clock that is funky, colourful and contemporary. Something to be enjoyed by the whole family and mark the generations as they pass—an underlying message of the importance of family time.

As a powerful vector of self-expression, watches are also a reflection of the world and the times in which we live. This year's watch trends are particularly inspired as they reflect on society, culture, economics, history, and a year that no one could have perceived or predicted. Apart from cradling history, size, shape, and pedigree, *Spice's* watch special issue charts watch makers as they continue to push the limits. You don't need to look at the sky to know when to expect a full moon, or even adjust the date for more than a hundred years—the IWC Big Pilot remembers the time, day, date, month, and year that you set today, till 2100 AD.

Dramatic dials and intricate designs have become de rigueur as more watches flash open casebacks and skeletal workings to exemplify watchmaking bravura. Another recent trend is a move towards gender-free watches. Classifying watches as men's and women's is slowly coming to an end as many women sport larger watches and men discover the beauty of gem settings. Many brands have done away with gender designation altogether to become more inclusive and allow the beauty of the timepieces to become the only distinguisher.

Non-Fungible Tokens have been in the news of late, but now they have entered the world of watchmaking with the first NFT timepiece offered for sale by Jean-Claude Biver, the legendary former LVMH watch division president. Biver created an NFT photograph, or digital twin as it is also called, of the first Bigger Bang Tourbillon Chronograph prototype.

With a magpie-like attention to the sparkly, haute joaillerie still shines brightly as a nod to hope and happier times. Bulgari summons its trademark colour-blocked jewellery to create two-row bracelet watches in round-cut diamonds, pink, purple and blue sapphires, red rubies, orange spinels, yellow sapphires, and green garnets and emeralds for its Rainbow Series.

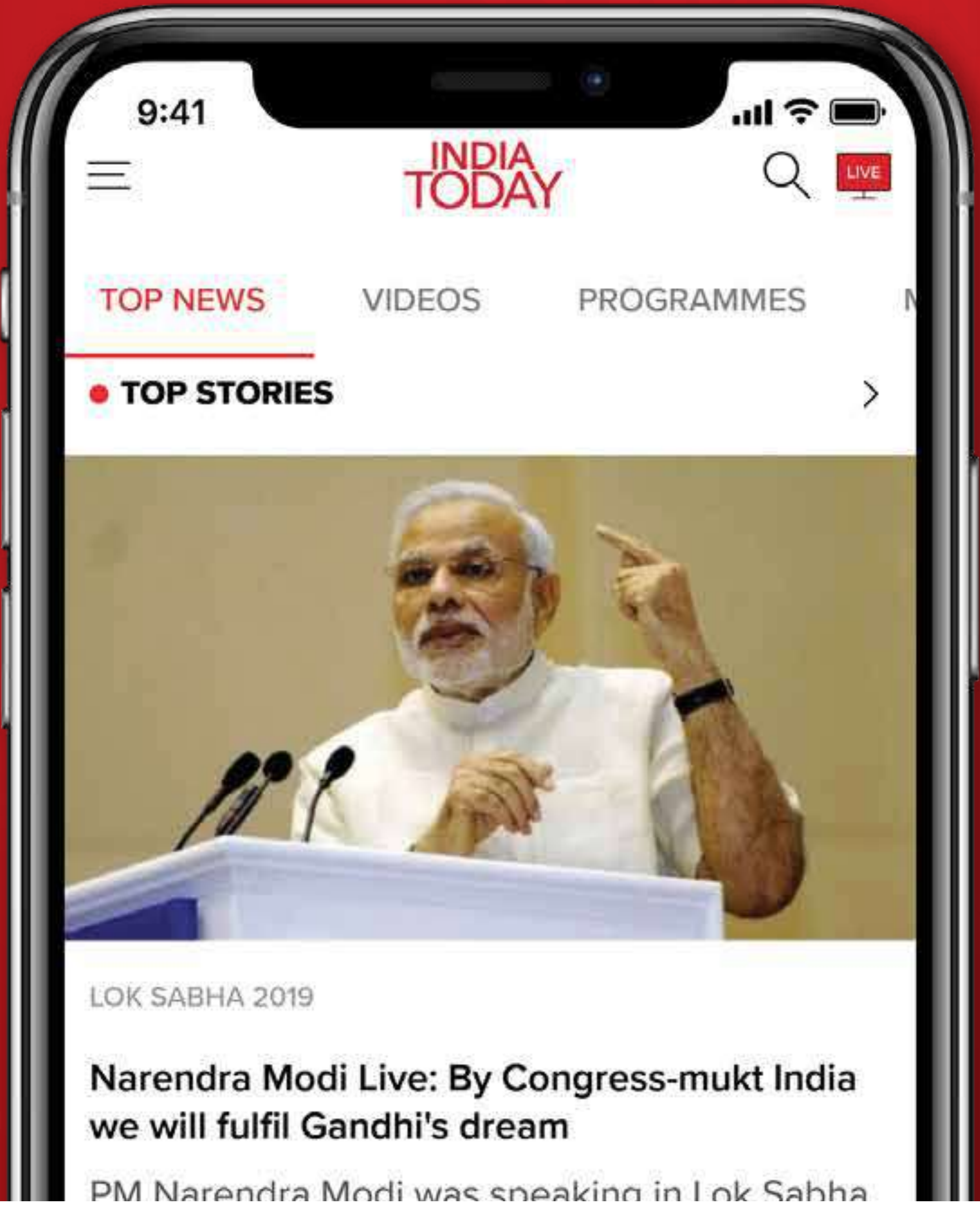
Meanwhile, the jewellery-adjacent world of watch straps is undergoing a total revolution with a whole range of vegan straps made out of apple peel, wood, cork, mushrooms, and more. One of the more surprising bytes of horological news this year was the announcement that Greubel Forsey, one of the most prestigious high-end watch brands, would only be using vegan straps from now on. Definitely a sign of the times.

**(Aroon Purie)**

INDIA TODAY

BREAKING NEWS

JUST A TAP AWAY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## THE FINEST HOUR

Watch out for the best collection of timepieces

Cover Photograph SHUTTERSTOCK

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# HOTSHEET

PICK OF THE MONTH

## Retro Cool

Amp up your sartorial quotient with the magic of vintage. Casio Vintage watches combine the nostalgia of flash back memories and preppy good looks. Their European Vintage collection is as fashion forward as they come. Time is but a heartbeat of the past that lays claim to the future.

**Price** on request;
**Availability**
www.casioindiashop.com

## Sneak Peek

Luxury is at the heart of the Gucci code, as is versatility. Demonstrating this versatility is Demetra—a luxury material that combines quality, softness and durability with an eco-friendly ethos. With three sneaker models—Gucci Basket, Gucci New Ace and Gucci Rhyton—to choose from, you decide which does Demetra the most credit.

**Price** on request;
**Availability** Brand Stores

## The new G in the G&T

Absolut Grapefruit, Pernod Ricard's citrus flavour addition to its already iconic portfolio, which includes Absolut Citron, Mandarin, Raspberry and Lime, adds colour besides a burst of flavour. Refreshing with a well-balanced natural sweetness, it's perfect for summer afternoons given over to leisure and languor—read more spirit in every sip.

**Price** Delhi ₹1,460; Mumbai ₹3,050; Bangalore ₹3,650;
**Availability** Retail stores

ABSOLUT
GRAPEFRUIT

## High Tea

Offering tea is like giving someone five minutes of alone time on a rain-swept afternoon. Felicity, from Teabox, allows you a hamper with a set of nine different teas. From the Classic Assam Black to Mountain Rose, Kolkata Street Masala Chai, Kashmiri Kahwa Saffron Green, to Wayanad Cardamom Masala Chai and Punjabi Masala Chai, it's almost a pan-India beverage trail.

**Price** ₹2,349; **Availability** in.teabox.com

# HOTSHEET

HOME

## Sonic Boom

If you are an unabashed audiophile with an eye for design then the Harman Onyx Studio 6 is just the audio accessory for you to flaunt. Crafted in a unique aluminium and fabric finish for an elegant look and feel, this bluetooth speaker can connect with two smart devices and takes turn playing music. It's great to look at too!

**Price** ₹15,999; **Availability** https://in.harmankardon.com

## Top Tables

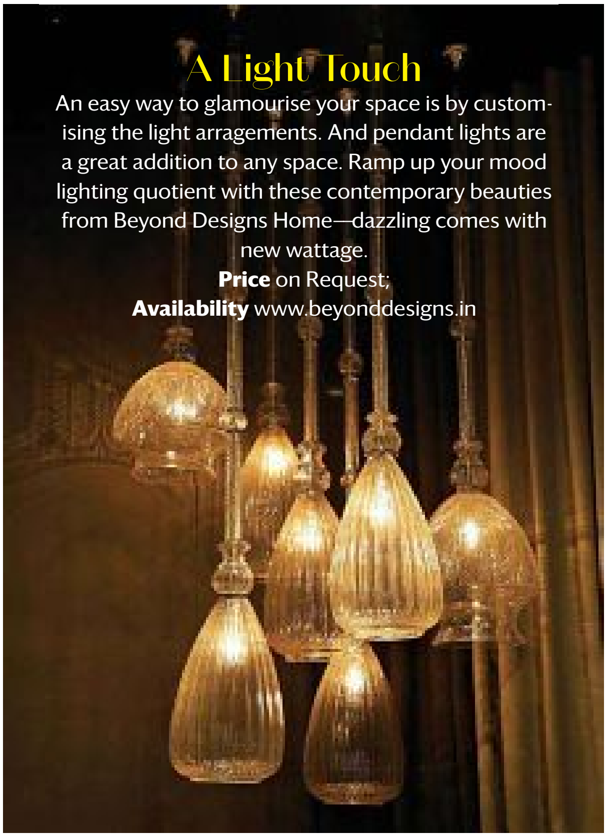
Console tables are finally having their moment as their versatility gives them a unique edge. Whether you choose to place them at the entrance, foyer or liven up a quiet corner in the living areas, this new collection of console tables by MADS Creations helps amplify choices.

**Price** on Request;
**Availability** Unit-527, 5th Floor Vipul Trade Center,Sohna Road, Gurugram;
https://madscreations.in

## Retro Fit

Something about Chesterfields just feels nostalgic. And this classic chesterfield-styled settee set is no exception. A beautiful set of two includes settees that can be used for storage and sitting. Now that's what you call beauty and brawn.

**Price** ₹38,000 (Set of 2);
**Availability** www.thedecorkart.com



## A Light Touch

An easy way to glamourise your space is by customising the light arragements. And pendant lights are a great addition to any space. Ramp up your mood lighting quotient with these contemporary beauties from Beyond Designs Home—dazzling comes with new wattage.

**Price** on Request;
**Availability** www.beyonddesigns.in

# A Toast to Timelessness

**Speyside's Aberlour distillery crafts premier single malt Scotch whiskies that mature over time to impart a robust and superlative taste**

By **TEAM SPICE**

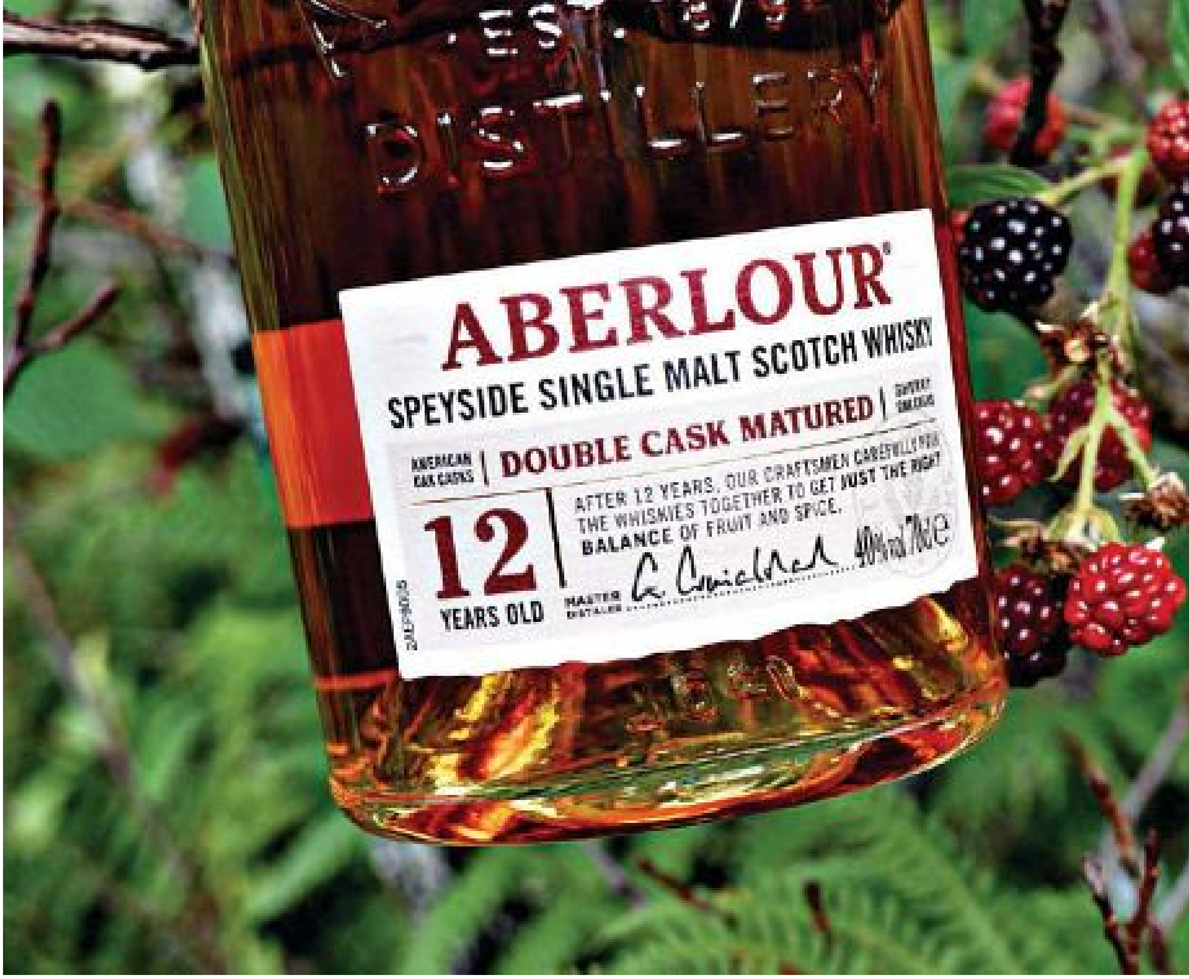
Perfect timing and exemplary craftsmanship, the twin parameters that define an extraordinary watch are also the guiding principles at Aberlour distillery. Here, it's all about substance over style, perfect timing and passion for the craft. The single malt Scotch whiskies produced here are born out of craft, passion and knowledge passed down generations. Its depth of flavours and character is achieved by the double-cask maturation process; first in Oloroso Sherry casks and then in American Oak barrels for a certain number of years. All this reveals the emphasis on craftsmanship and timing. Additionally, it draws its goodness from the best of surrounding environs, ensconced at the confluence of rivers Lour and Spey, to produce some exquisite single malt Scotch whiskies.

## Provenance

Founded by James Fleming in 1879, the region is steeped in centuries of history. For more than 1,400 years, there has been a community and signs of its long heritage are all around; from the age-old oak trees above Linn Falls to the mysterious standing stones on Fairy Hill.

The crystal-clear soft spring water that cascades down the slopes of Ben Rinnes, and makes its way from there along the Lour valley to the distillery, is the lifeblood of Aberlour malt whisky. A few miles down the road from the distillery is where the barley grows and that gives the whisky its remarkably distinctive character.

ABERLOUR EST. 1879 DISTILLERY
ABERLOUR
SPEYSIDE SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY
DOUBLE CASK MATURED
14 YEARS OLD
ABERLOUR EST. 1879 DISTILLERY
ABERLOUR EST. 1879 DISTILLERY


ABERLOUR
SPEYSIDE SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY
DOUBLE CASK MATURED
12 YEARS OLD
DISTILLERY

ABERLOUR
EST. 1879
DISTILLERY
SPEYSIDE SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

At Aberlour, the resources of nature and the founder's passion have blended smoothly to produce this multi-layered superlative single malt.

## 12 Year Old

The golden amber coloured Aberlour 12 Year Old Scotch Whisky double cask is a fine example of how the distinctively crisp, citrus character of Aberlour's new distillate is deftly softened by double cask maturation. In the double cask, the whisky is matured for a minimum of 12 years in Oloroso sherry casks and American oak barrels. It's this double cask maturation which subtly brings together the characteristics of each cask to create a truly rich and rewardingly complex range of single malts. Moreover, the maturing spirit in the warehouse inhales the moist Speyside air that gives it the delicate oak impression and an age statement. The 12 Year Old is soft and round on the nose with fruity notes of red apple and has a fine sherried character. The palate can taste the fruity aromas balanced with a rich chocolate, toffee, cinnamon and ginger spiciness that gives it a warm, lingering sweet and spicy finish.

## 14 Year Old

The deep amber and honey gold coloured 14 Year Old Scotch Whisky double cask retains the inherent character of the finest ingredients; imparting soft and gentle hints of blackcurrant and blackberry jam and subtle spice on the palate. It's the perfect bal-

ABERLOUR
EST. 1879
DISTILLERY
SPEYSIDE SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY
DOUBLE CASK MATURED
18 YEARS OLD
DISTILLED AND BOTTLED IN SCOTLAND

ance of rich and spicy yet subtle and elegant. Having a sweet vanilla and ripe cherry flavour, it has a long, sweet and perfectly balanced finish. In recognition of its quality, Aberlour 14 Year Old picked up several awards even before its launch.

ABERLOUR
EST. 1879
DISTILLERY
SPEYSIDE SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY
DOUBLE CASK MATURED
16 YEARS OLD
DISTILLED AND BOTTLED IN SCOTLAND

## 16 Year Old

With the depth and complexity that comes from being matured for 16 years in a combination of American oak casks and the finest Sherry butts, this expression's warm and fruity notes are enriched by an engagingly spicy sweetness. The 16 Year Old double cask has a rich scented floral and sweet raisin aroma with spicy nuttiness and notes of soft plum and gentle oak. It has a long, warm and a spicy fruity finish.

## 18 Year Old

The 18 Year Old is also spicy and luxurious. The mature and deeper Sherry influence adds more spiciness and a liquorice tang. Greater age adds body and develops the distinctive fruitiness to a rich raisin character. It has rich and complex notes of toffee and butterscotch combined with ripe peach and bitter orange. A perfect structure on the palate, the initial notes are of soft apricot and cream, offset by developing flavours of blackcurrant jam and sweet oak with a touch of honey. The finish is very long and balanced and progresses from crème brûlée to a gentle oak flourish. In keeping with its founder James Fleming's motto, 'Let the deed show', each of these whiskies from the distillery, does the talking and are a signature statement etched in time.

*For further details, log on to: www.aberlour.com*

# TIME FOR REFLECTION

From gender-free watches to NFTs, grandfather clocks and vegan straps, the watch industry is a reflection of an ever-changing world.

By **SOPHIE FURLEY**
Editor-at-Large World Tempus

Watches are not only a form of self-expression; they are also a reflection of the world in which we live. This year's watch trends are particularly interesting as they reflect society, culture, economics, history, and a year that no one could have predicted.

## Gender Free Horology

One of the latest trends to hit the watch industry is a move towards gender-free watches. Classifying watches as men's and women's is slowly coming to an end as many women don larger watches and men discover the beauty of gem settings. Many brands have removed the gender designation altogether to become more inclusive and allow all of us to enjoy timepieces for their beauty alone.

## Non Fungible Tokens

NFTs have been all over the news these last few years, but now they have entered the world of watchmaking with the first NFT timepiece offered for sale by Jean-Claude Biver,

**TOCK OF TOWN**
Clockwise from top: Greubel Forsey switches to vegan straps; Jacob & Co. and its NFT Epic SF24 tourbillon; The Kontwaz clock by Philippe Lebru X Alain Silberstein; Oris's Divers Sixty-Five Cotton Candy unisex collection

the legendary former LVMH watch division president. Biver created an NFT photograph, or digital twin as it is also called, of the first Bigger Bang Tourbillon Chronograph prototype. This was followed by a watch NFT by Jacob & Co. that was a video of a watch that doesn't exist. Rumour has it that more brands are about to release NFTs, making this an interesting, albeit confusing, trend to follow.

## The Resurrection of Clocks

For the longest time, clocks were just not cool. Then MB&F started to play with them and suddenly everyone was wishing they had one on their mantlepiece! The latest clock to make a comeback is the grandfather clock in the form of a joint venture between French watchmaker Alain Silberstein and constructor Utinam. This colourful contemporary creation was designed to be enjoyed by the whole family and mark the generations as they pass—a message of the importance of family time.

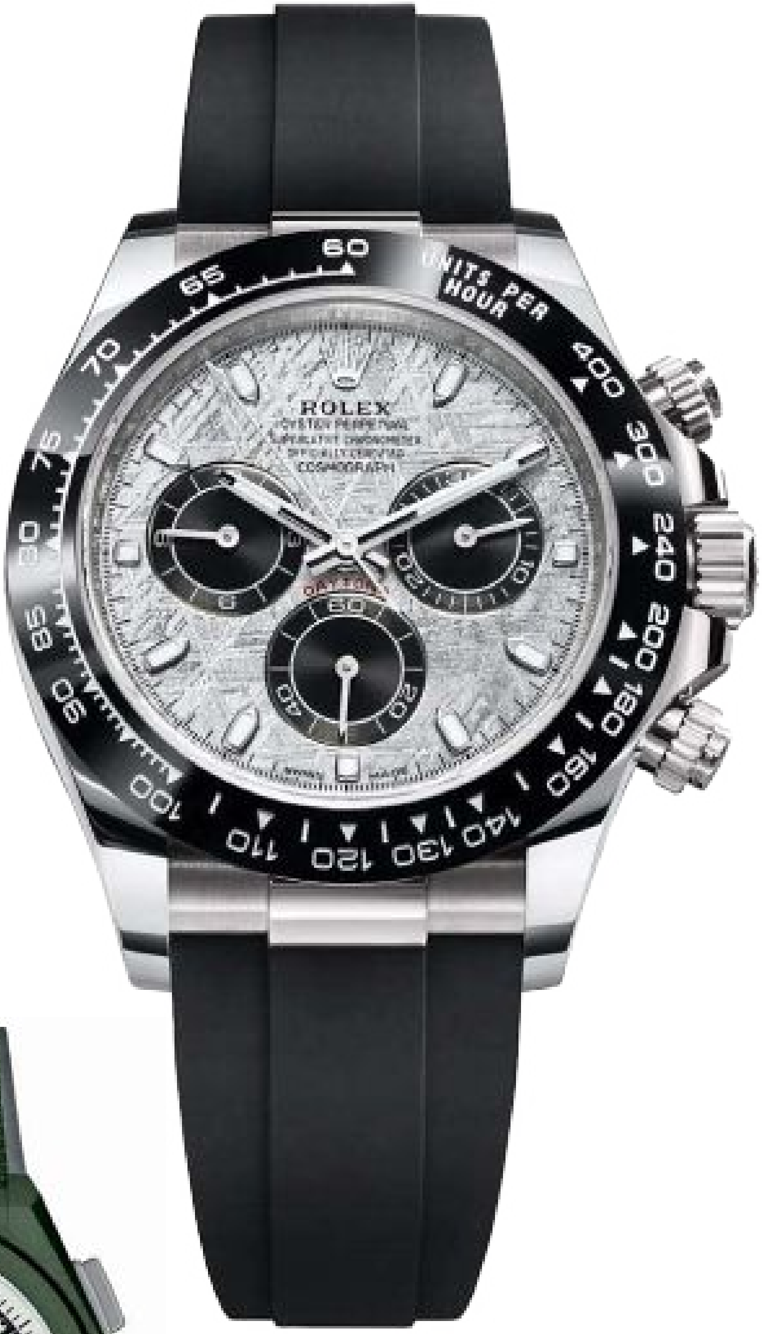
## Vegan Straps

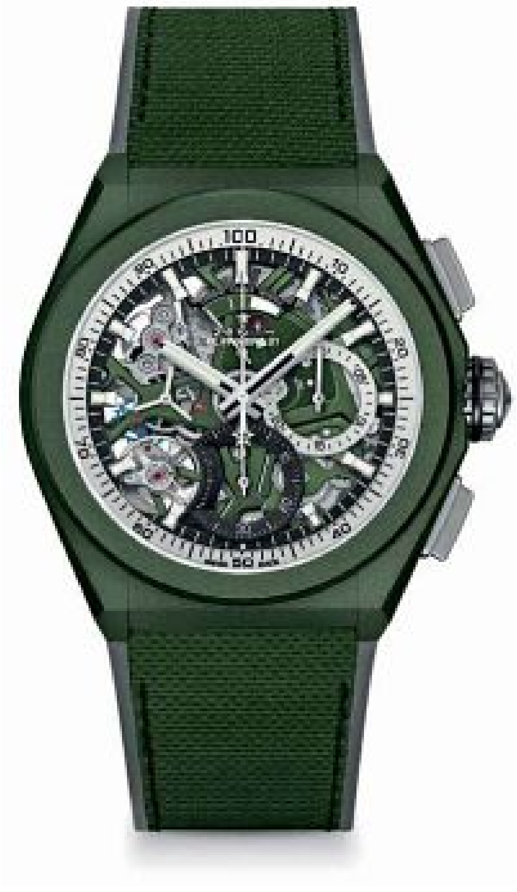
The world of watch straps is undergoing a total revolution at the moment with options for a whole range of vegan straps made out of apple peel, wood, cork, mushrooms, and more. The most surprising news this year was the announcement that Greubel Forsey, one of the most prestigious high-end watch brands, would only be using vegan straps from now on. They are using a range of plant-based straps that have a surprising resemblance to leather. This is definitely a sign of the times. These are just a few of the emerging watch trends for 2021 that make us reflect on diversity, family, animal conservation, sustaining a better future, and more.

JACOB & CO
NFT
1

# TIME CHECK

It's raining chronographs this year. Our list of the finest that record time to the last millisecond.





**ZENITH**

## Defy 21 Urban Jungle

When you put a khaki green ceramic case, a cordura-effect khaki green strap, and an open-work dial together, you need to make it meld. The Defy 21 Urban Jungle does just that, incorporating the El Primero 9004 movement. The movement has two escapements, for the watch and the chronograph.

**ROLEX**

## 2021 Daytona

Rolex certainly believes in the power of three, which is why they revealed not one, but three Oyster Perpetual Cosmograph Daytona watches in 2021: Everose, Yellow Gold, and White Gold. The dial is made out of rare metallic meteorite with elegant black chronograph counters at 3, 6, and 9 o'clock. All three are drop-dead gorgeous and come with Oyster or Oysterflex bracelets, attached by the Rolex-patented Oysterlock clasp.

**BREGUET**

## Marine Collection Chronograph

Riding the waves never equalled coasting on glory as effortlessly as sporting the nautical-horological masterpiece from the house of Breguet. It arrived this year with a new dial that is all in blue with a sunray-brushed pattern. The titanium case is complemented with a blue alligator strap or a titanium bracelet option. It's a true homage to seafarers and mariners.

**CHOPARD**

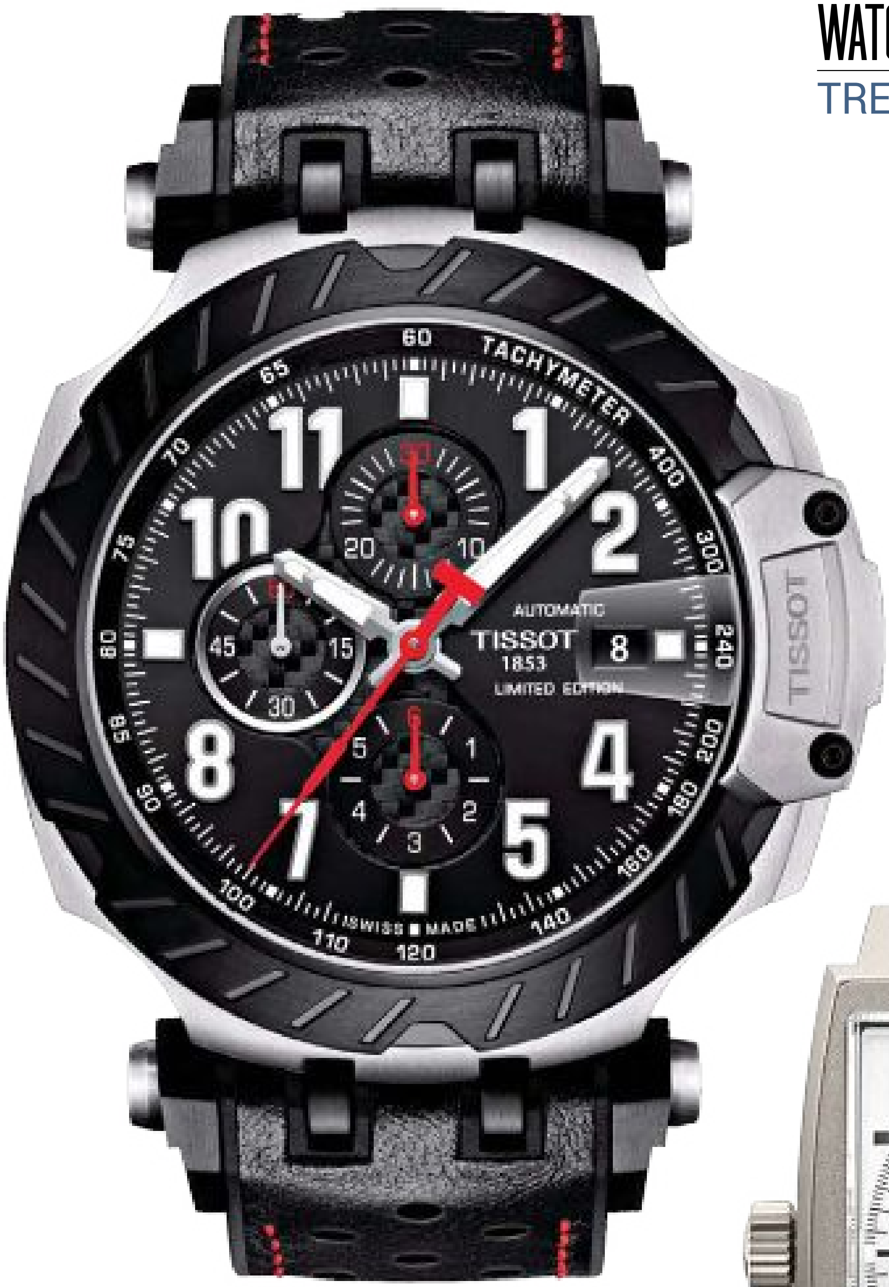
## Mille Miglia 2021 Race Edition

The 2021 Mille Miglia Race Edition arrived in a limited edition, marking yet another chapter of the iconic partnership with the event. This year's variant paid tribute to "The Race of the Red Arrow" race, available in 1000 stainless steel renditions and 250 in 18 carat rose gold.

**BLANCPAIN**

## Fifty Fathoms Bathyscaphe Chronograph Flyback

Green is the choice of colour for the Bathyscaphe Chronograph Flyback, which is awash with the colour from dial to bezel. There are three well-aligned sub-dials on the sunburst dial of the diver's watch. The ingenious dial changes the hues based on the angles of illumination.


TACHYMETER
AUTOMATIC
TISSOT
1853
LIMITED EDITION
SWISS MADE

**TISSOT**

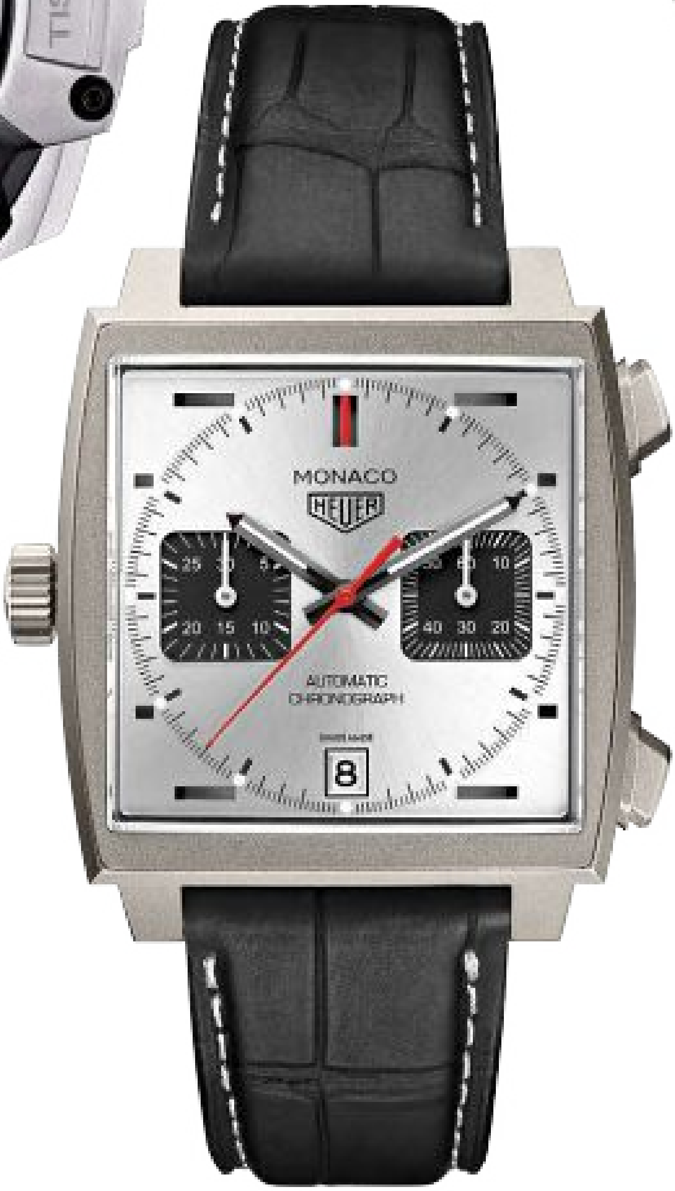
## T-Race MotoGP 2020 Automatic Chronograph Limited

Limited to just 3,333 pieces, the 2020 T-Race Chronograph continues to inspire MotoGP lovers. The 45mm case is aimed to mimic the characteristics of a motorbike to the best of its ability. The depth-set numerals, bulbous crown, and gritty strap fixtures lend it an apltly sporty look and feel.

**TAG HEUER**

## Monaco Titan

Celebrating the return of the Monaco Grand Prix in 2021, Monaco Titan arrived with just 500 units, bearing the recognisable, square 41mm titanium case and two black sub-dials that sit among sporty red highlights. The dial is protected by a domed bevelled sapphire crystal, while rectangular buttons keep the unique geometry consistent beyond the dial.


MONACO
HEUER
AUTOMATIC
CHRONOGRAPH

**MONTBLANC**

## 1858 Monopusher Chronograph Origins Limited Edition 100

Montblanc has taken inspiration from the 1930s reference to create a stellar 'Origins' timepiece. The bronze case and black dial, officer hinged case-back, and hand-wound functionality is a masterful throwback, with no less than a manufacture MB M16.29 calibre powering it.

FAVRE-LEUBA

**FAVRE-LEUBA**

## Sky Chief Chronograph

Up-playing its remorseless symmetry, Favre-Leuba's Sky Chief Chronograph bounced back into the scene with bold and urban watches. Autumn Green, Burgundy Red, and Velvet Black are the hues up for grabs with chequered motifs on the chronograph pushers and the logo on the crown. The 43mm watch arrived with a new advertising campaign resounding the slogan, 'Trust Yourself'.

OMEGA
Speedmaster
PROFESSIONAL

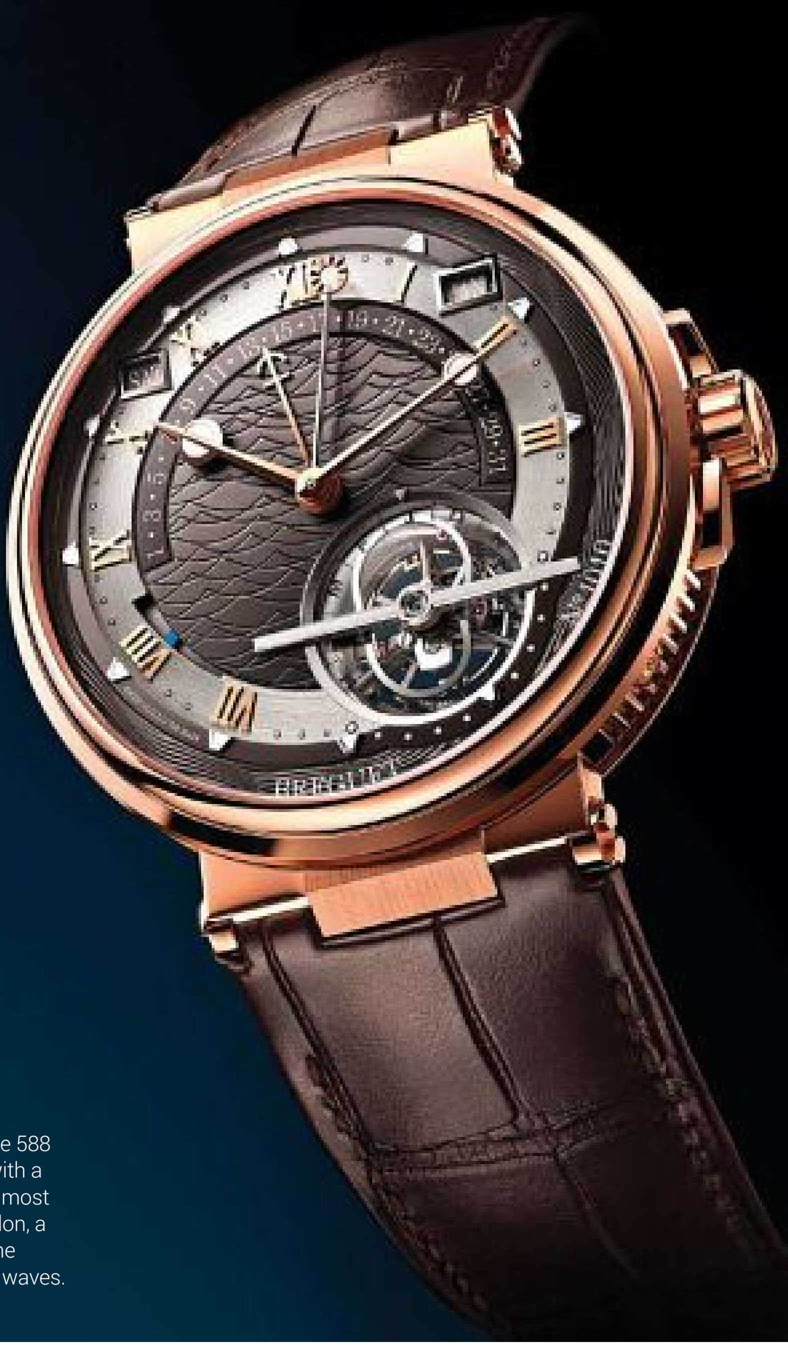
**OMEGA**

## Speedmaster Professional Moonwatch 'Master Chronometer' With Co-Axial Caliber 3861

The first watch on the moon, the Speedmaster Professional Moonwatch was revived with a co-axial escapement enabled Caliber 3861 movement this year. While the contrasting black dial and bezel steal the show on stainless steel; it looks quite stark with five links per row

# COMPLEX WONDERS

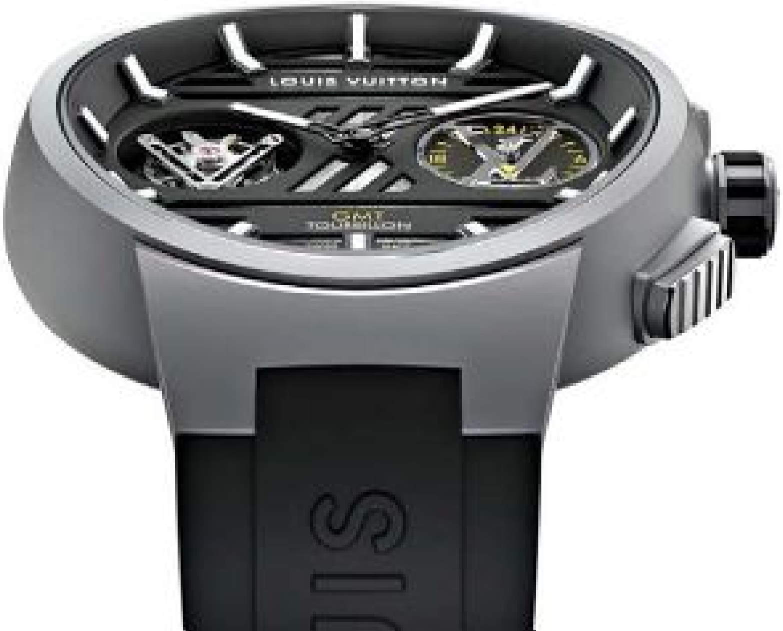
Celebrating tourbillions: Horological masterpieces that tell time with the utmost accuracy



**BREGUET**

## Marine Tourbillon Équation Marchante 588

A Breguet needs no introduction. The 2020 Équation Marchante 588 in particular brings its gilded charm to the 2017 predecessor, with a rose gold case and slate grey dial. Measuring 49.3mm, it is the most complicated watch in the Marine series, incorporating a tourbillon, a perpetual calendar, and an Equation of Time (EOT) indicator. The dial's guilloche pattern reflects the timepiece's tribute to ocean waves.



**LOUIS VUITTON**

## Tambour Curve GMT Flying Tourbillon

Inspired by travellers and destined for fashionistas, this LV Flying Tourbillon has a distinct, graphical design that makes it recognisable. Above the shot-blasted titanium case sits the convex crystal. But the GMT sub-dial at 3 o'clock with a rather organic LV symbol steals the show.

### A. LANGE & SOHNE

## Tourbograph Perpetual Honeygold

The German watchmaker's proprietary Honeygold has found its use in the case and complex dial of the 2020 Tourbograph Perpetual Honeygold. There are five different pieces put together to create the dial. The complications include a tourbillon, a chronograph, a rattrapante function, and a perpetual calendar.

A. LANGE & SÖHNE
GLASHÜTTE

### BULGARI

## Octo Finissimo Tourbillon Chronograph Skeleton Automatic

Self-professed to be the flattest wristwatch tourbillon chronograph ever made, the all new Octo Finissimo Chronograph Skeleton Automatic continues to flex the brand's ultra-thin watch dominance. The gorgeous 42mm sandblasted 5 titanium case is just 7.4mm thin and houses the BVL 388 movement.

### HUBLOT

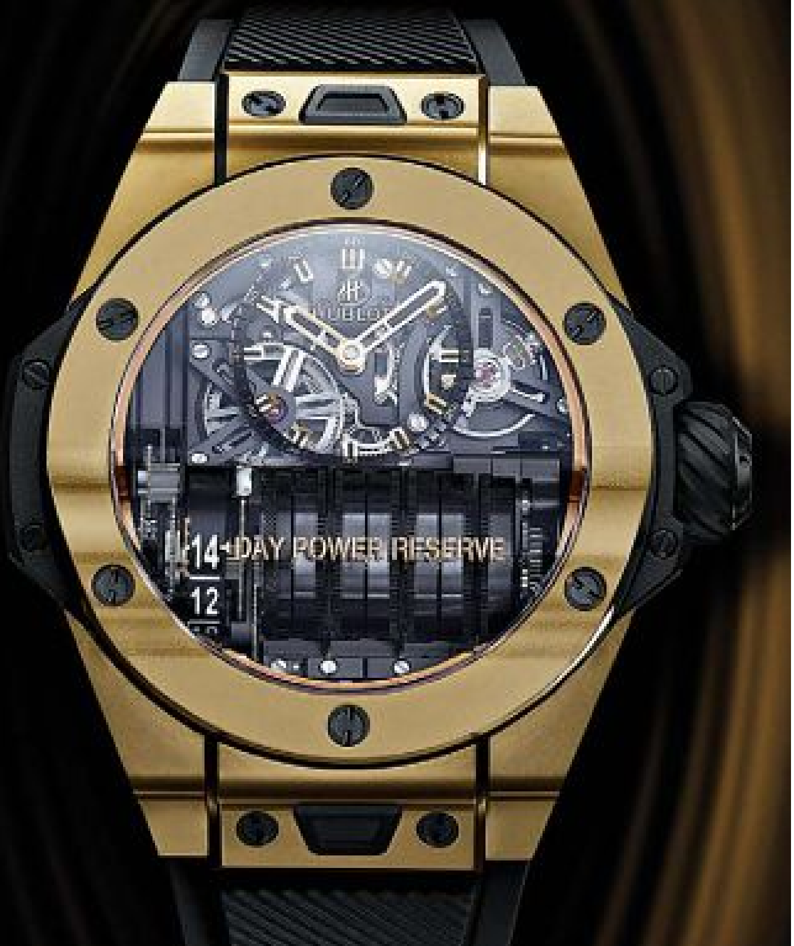
## Spirit of Big Bang Tourbillon 5-Day Power Reserve in Carbon White

Reminiscing about the chaos and subsequent order of the Big Bang is this tribute by Hublot, aptly called the Spirit of Big Bang. The case-back and bezel are entirely crafted from carbon fibre with white composite inclusions. The movements reveal themselves through the sapphire exhibition case-back.

# GO FOR GOLD

Innovative alchemy and inimitable style prove that gold never loses its sheen. Here are watches that rise and shine.

JAQUET DROZ



**HUBLOT**

### Big Bang MP-11 Magic Gold

Magic Gold has been described as 'virtually scratchproof' by Hublot. The 18-carat material that drapes this stunning watch gives it the solidness of an amulet. It comes with a two-week power reserve and sports the traditional Big Bang integrated case design. The sapphire crystal grants voyeuristic delights in showing the calibre HUB9011 hand-wound movement in the works.

**JAQUET DROZ**

## Bird Repeater “300th Anniversary Edition”

The 300th birth anniversary of Pierre Jaquet-Droz saw the arrival of the intriguing Bird Repeater with a white mother-of-pearl and black onyx dial. It bears hand-painted animations of birds with their hatchlings in the 47mm 18-carat red gold case that pays homage to magical songs of Robins that echo across the Swiss valleys.

**MONTBLANC**

## 1858 Split Second Chronograph in Lime Gold

Lime Gold is a fresh new squeeze of the precious metal that finds its application in the 1858 Montblanc Chronograph. The alloy is made of 18-carat gold, silver, and iron, and flirts tastefully with the green markers and cathedral hands on the dial. The limited-edition watch is powered by the calibre MB M16.31 movement.

**PANERAI**

## Luminor Marina Panerai Goldtech 44mm (PAM01112)

The Panerai Goldtech made the luxury watch world take notice with its distinctly darker shade and high resistance to fading, as compared to standard 18-carat 5N pink gold. It is created with 75 per cent gold, 24 per cent copper, and a dash of platinum. It comes with an incredible 70-hour power reserve, a true ally to any seafarer.

**BELL & ROSS**

## BR 05 Blue Gold

The Blue Gold BR 05 comes with a combination of a rose gold case and a metallic blue dial. The excellent polished finishing with bevels along the rounded corners adds to the luxe quotient of the timepiece. It's powered by calibre BR-CAL.321 movement and is available with a matching rose gold bracelet and rubber strap.

# ALL IN ONE

Why these fine perpetual calendars from this year are worthy of your time

**BULGARI**

## Octo Finissimo Perpetual Calendar

Bulgari's impossibly attractive Octo Finissimo is among the most beautiful and unique perpetual calendar watches out there. The 30-day months, ultra-thin Perpetual calibre BVL 305, month dial, and days indicator pleasantly shares room on the blue and grey dials, enclosed in a titanium case. A Bulgari never settles for less.

**A. LANGE & SÖHNE**

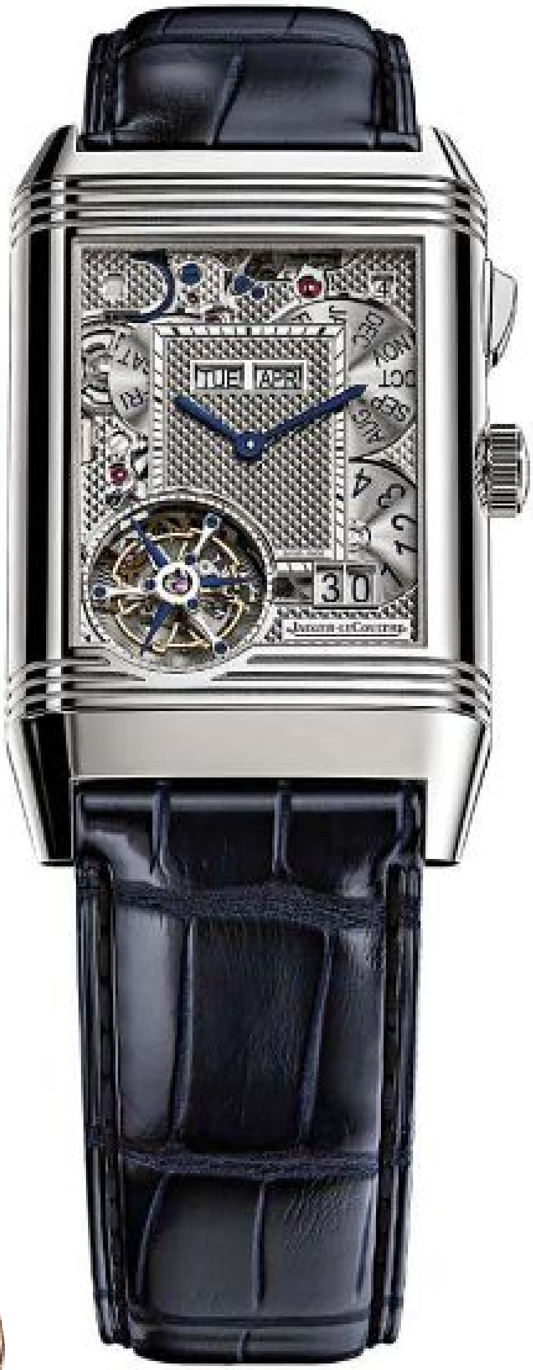
## 1 Perpetual Calendar

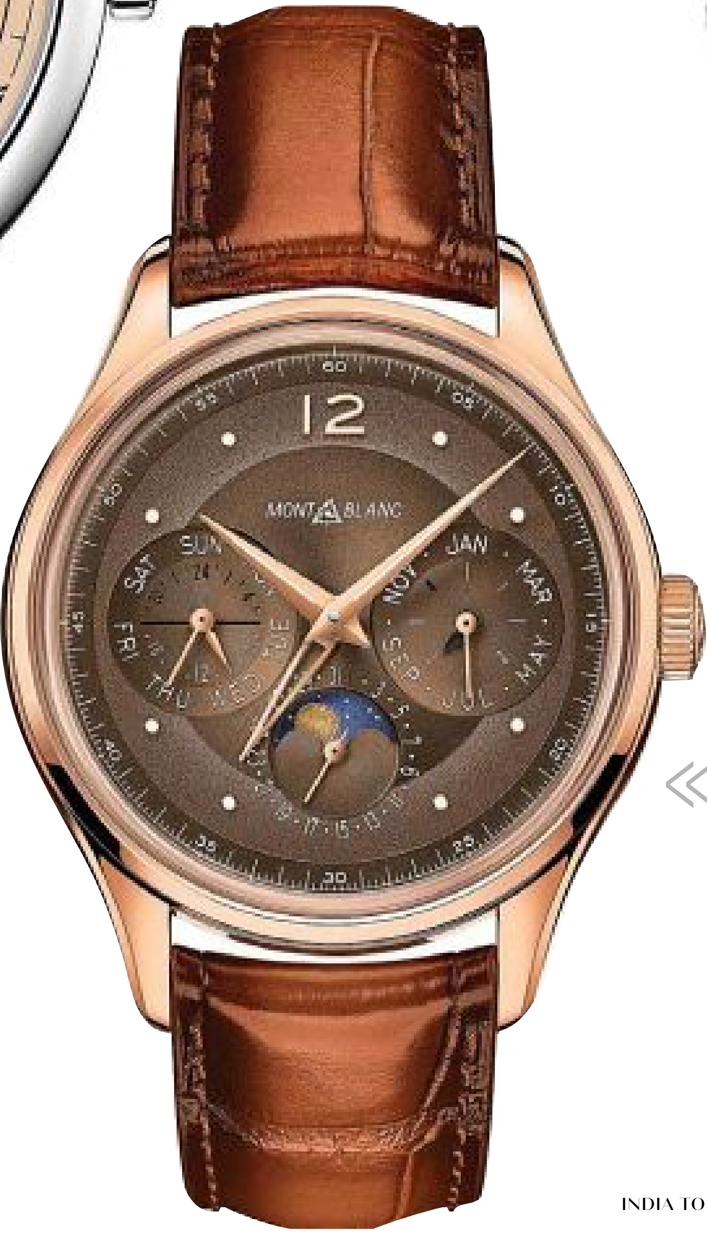
The most recognisable and widely-loved perpetual calendars get another push from the house of Lange. The 1 Perpetual Calendar boasts the works—hours, minutes, seconds, perpetual calendar, moon phase display, day/night indicator—all in a beautiful pink gold or white gold case. The former gets a grey dial, while the latter sports a pink gold dial. That's extra points for sheer elegance.

**JAEGER-LECOULTRE**

## Reverso Hybris Mechanica Calibre 185 Quadriptyque

2021 saw the most complicated Reverso from JLC. The 185 Quadriptyque may be a 51mm colossus but the complications that it accommodates matter more. Each of the limited edition 10 pieces are four-faced, with 800 parts in all. The case manages timekeeping, while the cradle handles the astronomical and lunar details, including the age of the moon in both hemispheres. Needless to say, we are impressed.

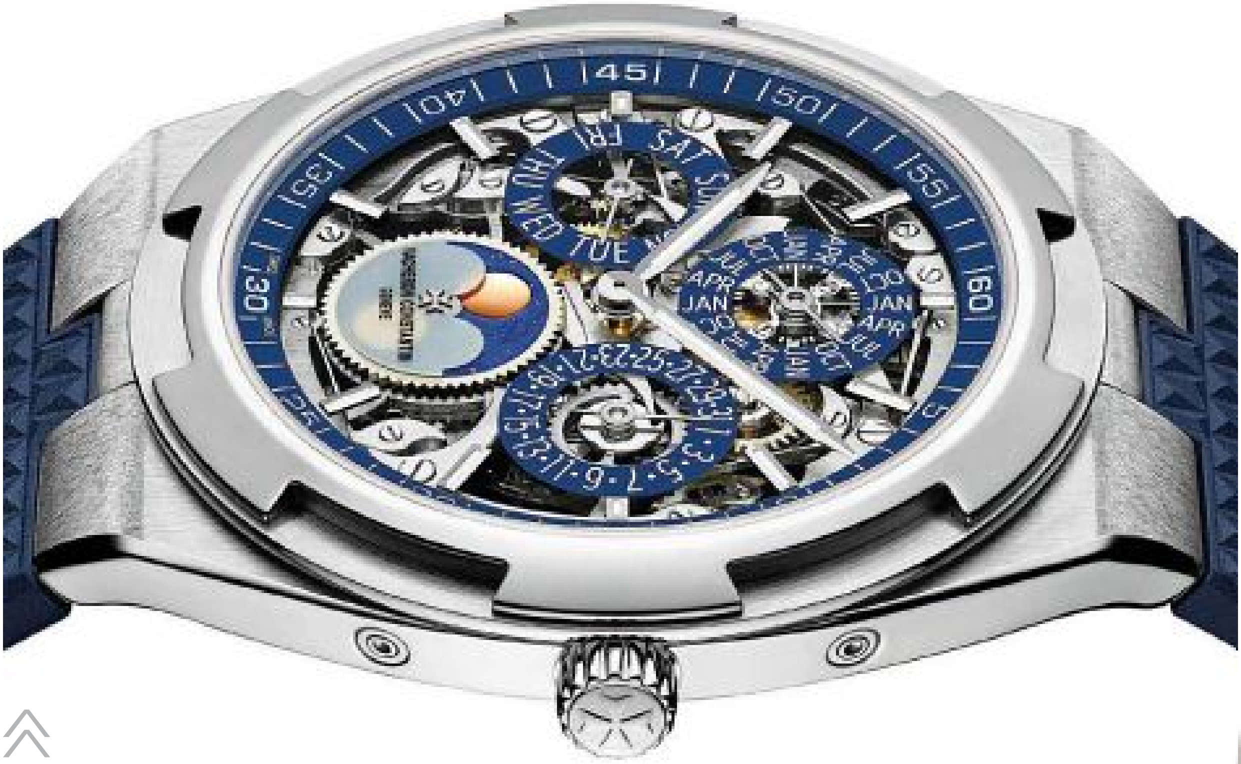




**MONTBLANC**

## Heritage Manufacture Perpetual Calendar 100

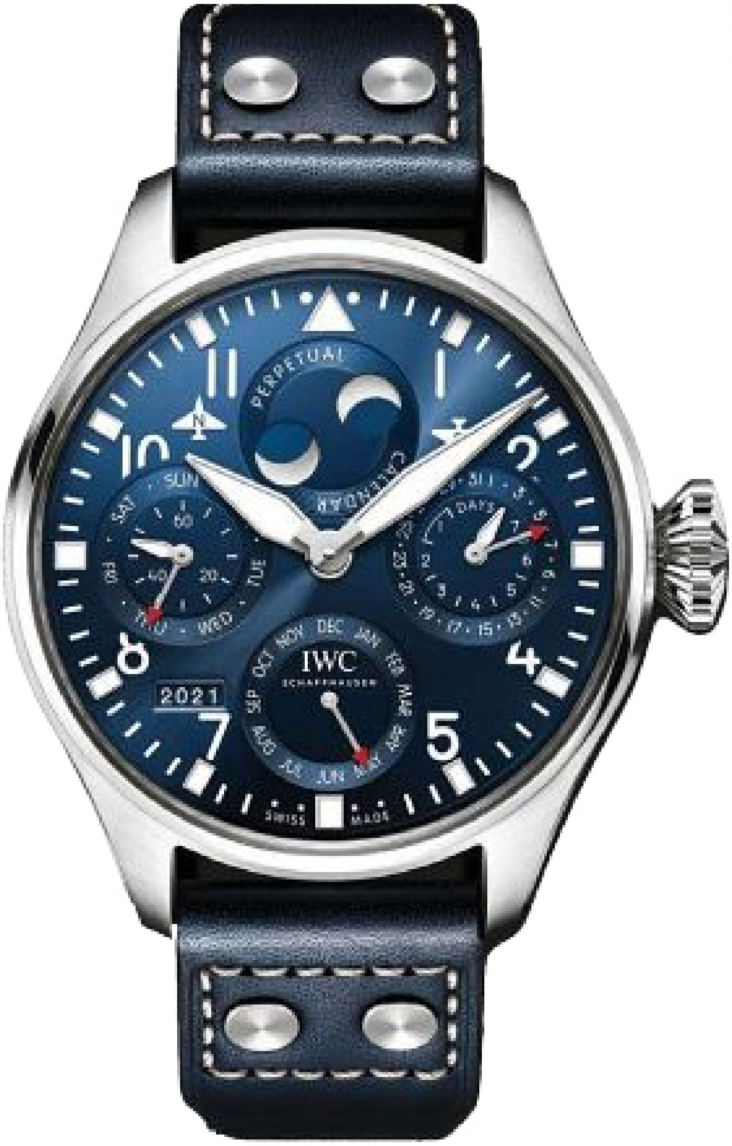
Montblanc's Heritage Perpetual Calendar is stunningly antique in its style, with a limited edition (100) burnt caramel dial and a fully-polished 18-carat rose gold case. The perpetual calendar is anchored in the centre while the sub-dials indicate the date, month, moon-phase, and leap year.



**VACHERON CONSTANTIN**

## Overseas Perpetual Calendar Ultra-Thin in White Gold

With two options---a skeletonised and a deep blue dial---the White Gold Ultra-Thin perpetual calendars from Vacheron are scintillatingly elegant. At just 8.1mm thin, the case sports a hexagonal bezel with a Maltese cross design, a fluted crown, and a sapphire crystal case-back.



**IWC**

## Big Pilot's Watch with Perpetual Calendar

For the masters of the sky with a fetish for symmetry, the IWC Big Pilot remembers the time, day, date, month, and year that you set today, till 2100 AD. The 42.6mm stainless steel case has a deep blue dial with lumed indexes. You have the moon-phase, date and day, month, and day sub-dials place in a satisfying 3-6-9-12 arrangement. This calls for some heay lifting.

**PATEK PHILIPPE**

## Ref. 5236P-001 In-Line Perpetual Calendar

Patek Phillippe new calibre 31-260 PS QL movement powers a classic design in the 001 Perpetual Calendar. The 41.3mm platinum case comes with options of a platinum or sapphire-crystal case-back. The blue dial displays the date, leap-year cycle, and day/night indicator with moon-phases.

**CHOPARD**

## L.U.C Perpetual Twin

The L.U.C. Perpetual Twin has been reimagined with a 43mm stainless steel case with a pink gold option and a sapphire case-back. Depending on the case, you can either get a blue steel dial or a gold ruthenium-grey dial with sunray-brushed patter with Super-LumiNova indexes.

**HERMES**

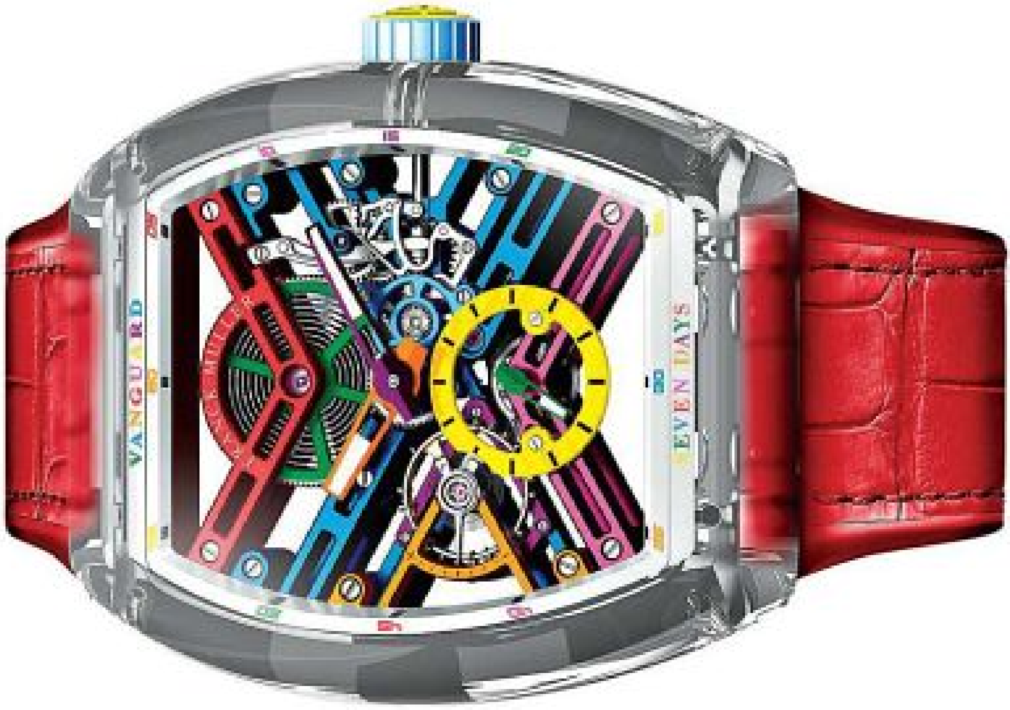
## Slim d'Hermès Quantième Perpétuel

Within the 39.5mm rose gold case of the new Hermes Perpetual Calendar sits the powerful calibre H1950 self-winding movement. On the opaline silvered dial, you have four sub-dials for date and time, date, month, and a mother of pearl moon to indicate the moon phases.

WATCH SPECIAL 2021
TRENDING NOW

# SKELETAL WONDERS

These timepieces offer a clear glimpse into their intricate craft and unique design



**FRANCK MULLER**

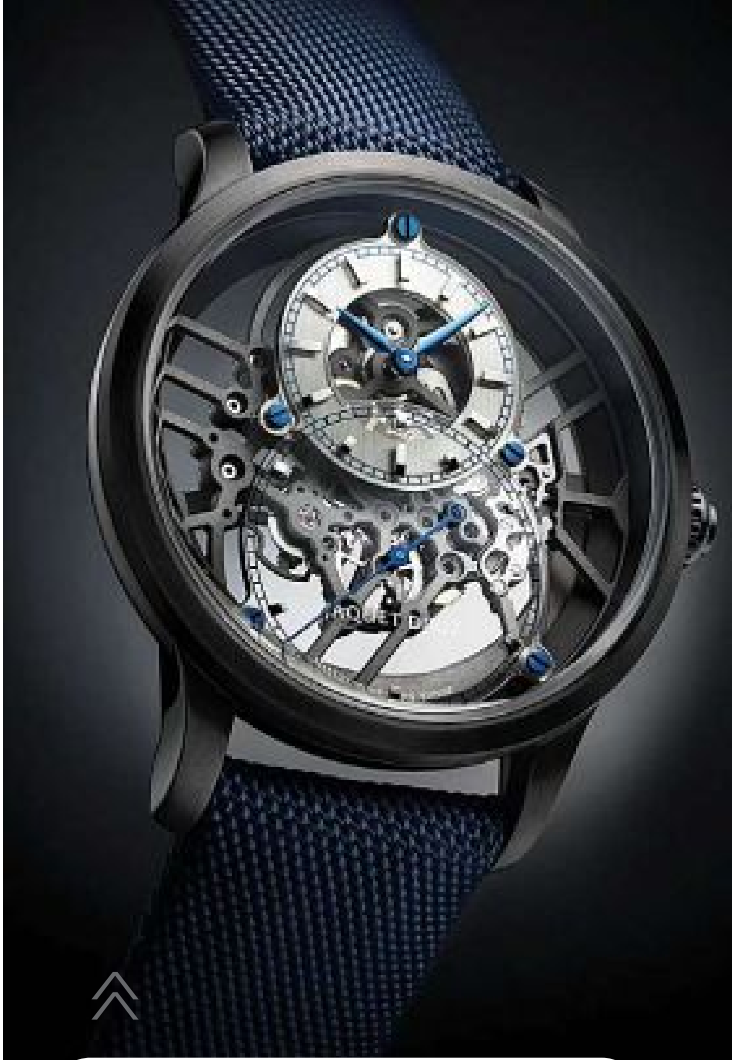
## Vanguard Skeleton Sapphire

Franck Muller's popular Vanguard now comes with a skeletal sapphire, revealing the spectrum of colours that represent the hand-winding in-house movement and the incredible 7-day power reserve. The bridges are colourfully anodised, to give your wrist a lively invigoration, promising to start many a conversation. The bridges are made with lightweight aluminium.

**HUBLOT**

## Big Bang Integral Tourbillon Full Sapphire

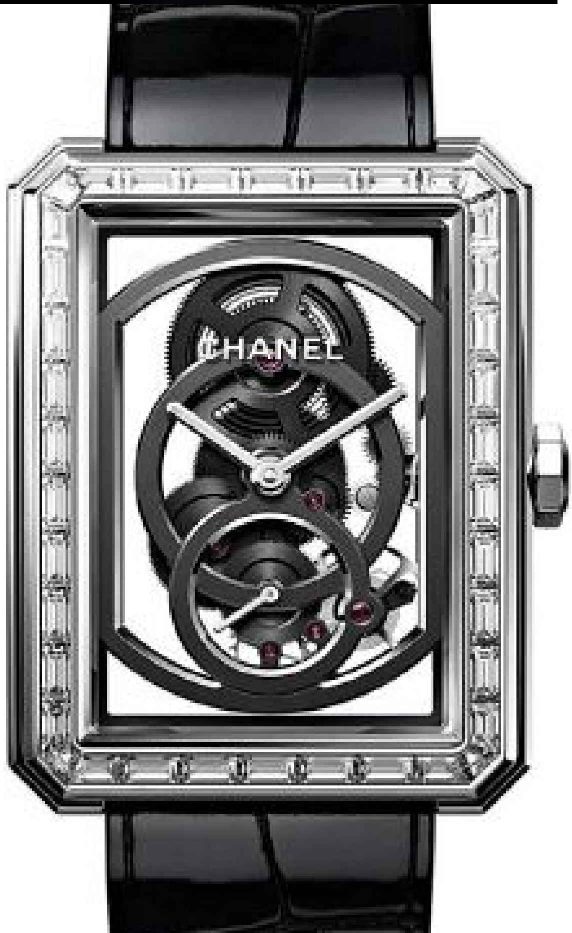
If you could choose a window to witness the workings of a movement, it would most likely open up to a Hublot tourbillon-based one. Encased in a scratch-proof sapphire crystal case, with a matching sapphire crystal bracelet, the Big Bang Integral Tourbillon is spectacular in every sense. The 43mm spectacle has an automatic winding system and a 3-day power reserve.



**JAQUET DROZ**

## Grande Seconde Skelet-One

For those who will be smitten by the radical absence of a dial, the intricate Grande Seconde Skelet-One by Jaquet Droz is a sight to behold. The self-intersecting hours and minutes dial and the seconds subdials form a recognisable figure '8'. The limited-edition watches will come with green, blue, and yellow fabric straps, with matching highlights on the dials.



**CHANEL**

## BOY·FRIEND Skeleton X-Ray

Limited to just 100 pieces, Chanel's BOY-FRIEND Skeleton X-Ray watch is true to its name with a sapphire case and bezel, an 18-carat crown set with 5 baguette-cut diamonds, and a glossy alligator calfskin strap with an 18-carat White Gold buckle. It's truly a Chanel.

**GIRARD-PERREGAUX X ASTON MARTIN**

## Skeleton Tourbillon

What we'd give to see a see-through Aston Martin could now be redirected to the gorgeous Skeleton Tourbillon. With three flying bridges, it reflects the brand's former avatars and comes encased in a 44mm case of grade 5 titanium with a black DLC coating.

**HARRY WINSTON**

## Project Z14

Among the few skeletal watches that make the complications seem aesthetically laid out from a design perspective is Project Z14. The open-dial design is complemented with a grid-motif sub-dial and blue accents that highlight the time and 30-second retrograde display.

**CARTIER**

## Rotonde de Cartier Precious Icon Set

The limited-edition trio released by Cartier this year reemphasises Cartier's 'iconic' stature in horology. The Mysterious Skeleton Double Tourbillon stands out in the set of three, with its narrow bezel and platinum case, flaunting Cartier's cabochon crown at 3 o'clock.

देश का नं. 1 हिंदी न्यूज़ ऐप

जुड़े रहिए हर खबर से, कहीं भी, कभी भी

अभी डाउनलोड करें

aajtak.in/app

उपलब्ध है

12:30

होम | वीडियो | फोटो | कार्यक्रम | सो सॉरी

नमस्कार!

Missed Daily Capsule?
Tap to see it again.

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बड़ी ख़बरें

जम्मू-कश्मीर

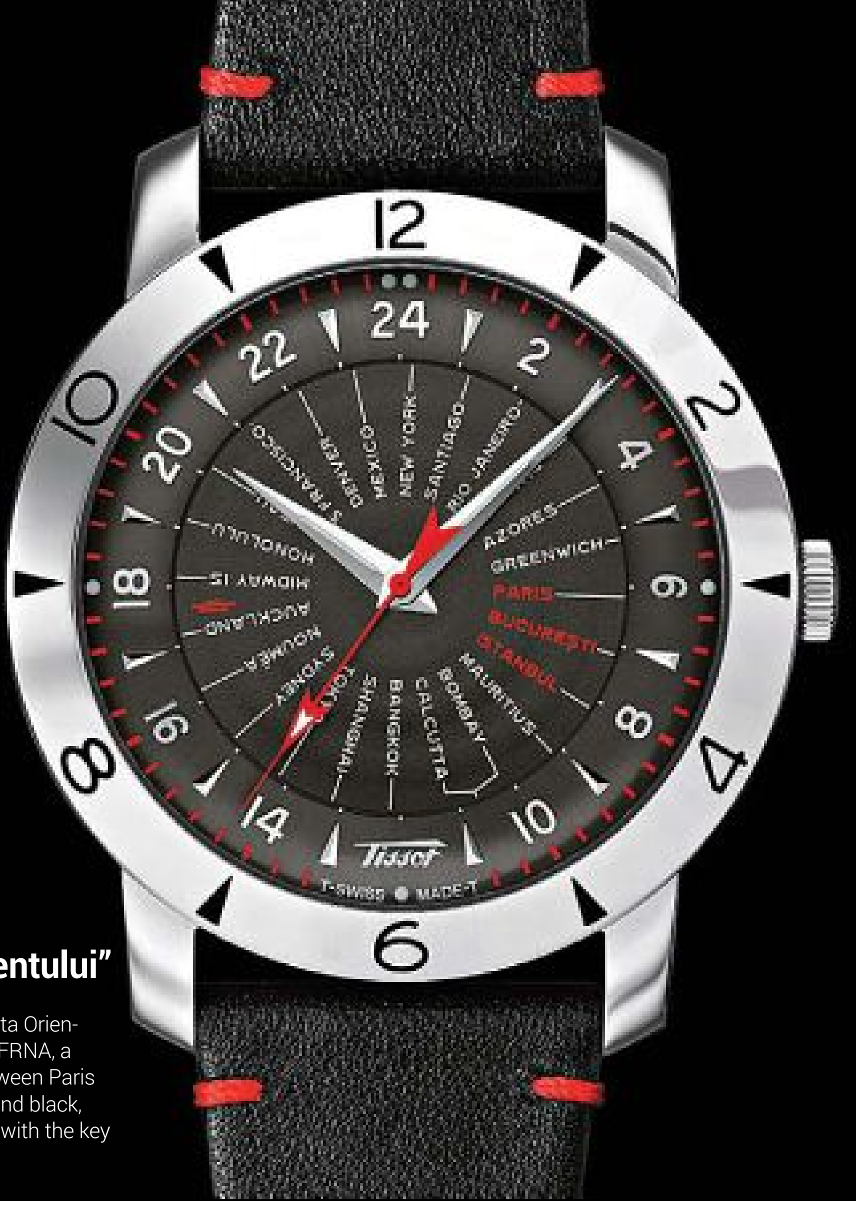
जम्मू-कश्मीर के शोपियां में बड़ा आतंकी हमला, 4 पुलिसकर्मी शहीद

पिछले कुछ दिनों में घाटी में आतंकी हमलों में तेजी आई है. एक ओर आतंकी सेना को निशाना बना रहे हैं, तो वहीं सेना भी ऑपरेशन चला

बड़ी खबरें | लाइव टीवी

# VINTAGE APPEAL

Here are a few timepieces that have drawn inspiration from the yesteryears to come with a modern update


Tissot
T-SWISS MADE-T
NEW YORK
SANTIAGO
RIO JANEIRO
AZORES
GREENWICH
PARIS
BUCURESTI
ISTANBUL
MAURITIUS
BOMBAY
CALCUTTA
BANGKOK
SHANGHAI
TOKYO
SYDNEY
NOUMEA
AUCKLAND
MIDWAY IS
HONOLULU
S. FRANCISCO
DENVER
MEXICO

**TISSOT**

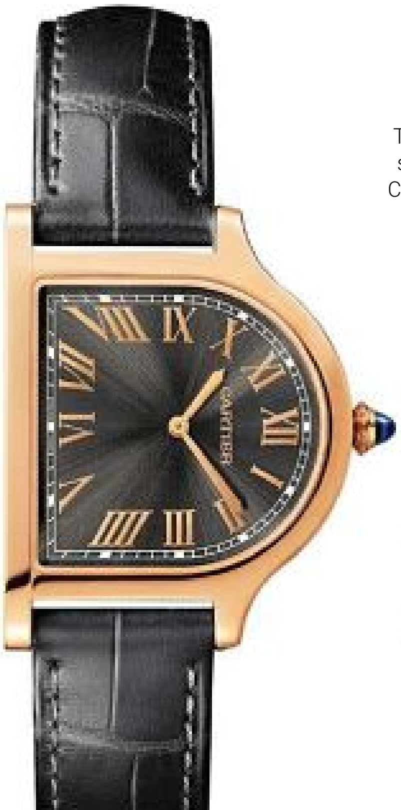
### Heritage Navigator "Săgeata Orientului"

A remake of Tissot's original from the 1950s, the Săgeata Orientului celebrates the centenary year of the founding of CFRNA, a French-Romanian transcontinental airline that flew between Paris and Istanbul in the 1920s. With a colour palette of red and black, the 43mm watch sports the names of cities on the dial with the key destinations marked in red.

**CARTIER**

### Cloche de Cartier

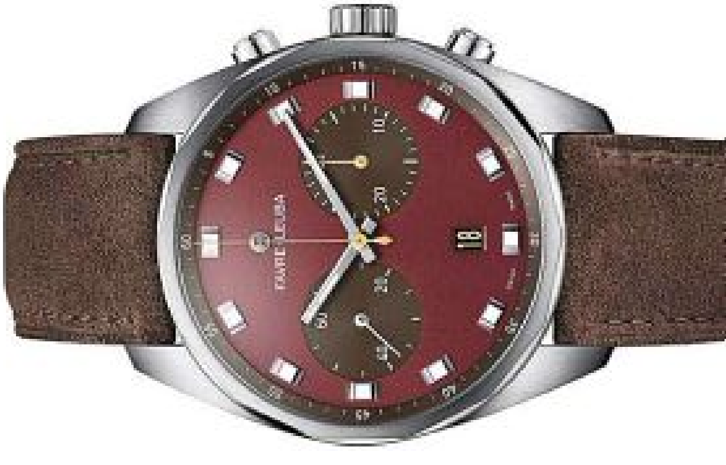
The legendary cloche design made a return with options of Yellow Gold, Pink Gold, and Platinum. The platinum watch shows off a skeletonized caliber 9626 movement with diamonds forming an ornate perimeter around it. The cabochon crown sits on top of XII.



**FAVRE-LEUBA**

### Sky Chief Chronograph

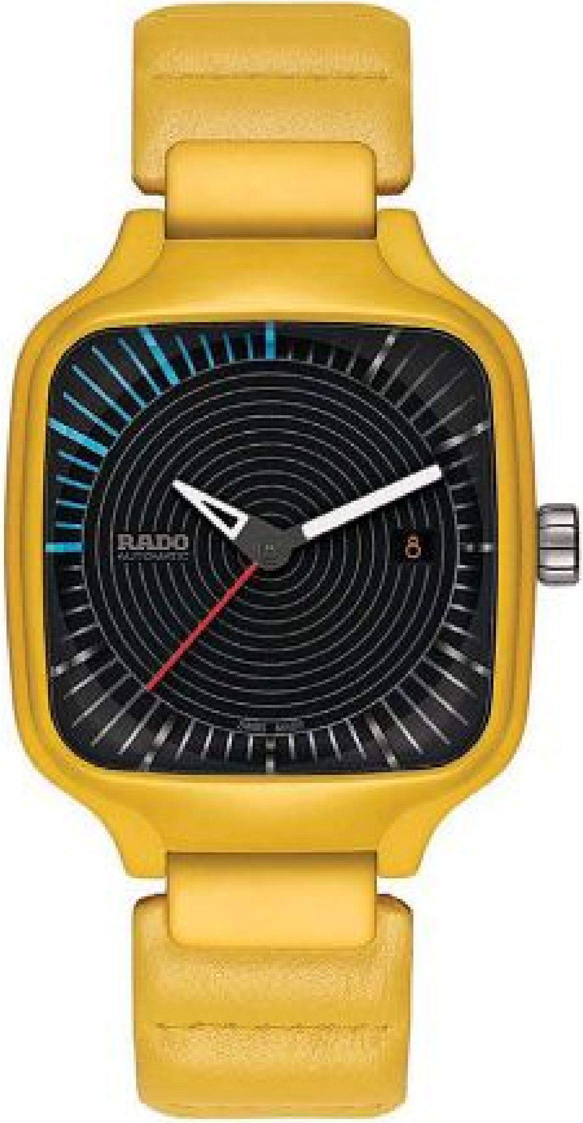
The oldest Swiss watch company, Favre-Leuba, made its return some time ago and has now brought in a retro green Sky Chief Chronograph with an Autumn Green dial and black sub-dials at 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock. It is paired with the dark brown strap.

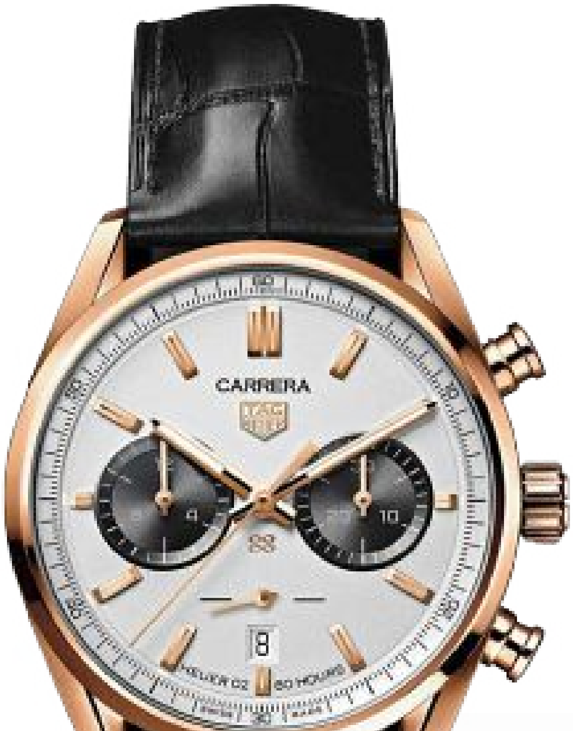

FAVRE-LEUBA

**RADO**

## True Square Designer Collection

In collaboration with British industrial designer, Tej Chauhan, Rado has mixed up high-tech ceramic and the magic of shapes to create the most vibrant watch in the True Square collection. Also, in the collection is the YOY collaboration from Japan with the minimalist True Square Undigital, and the Dutch/Italian design studio's discrete True Square Formafantasma.

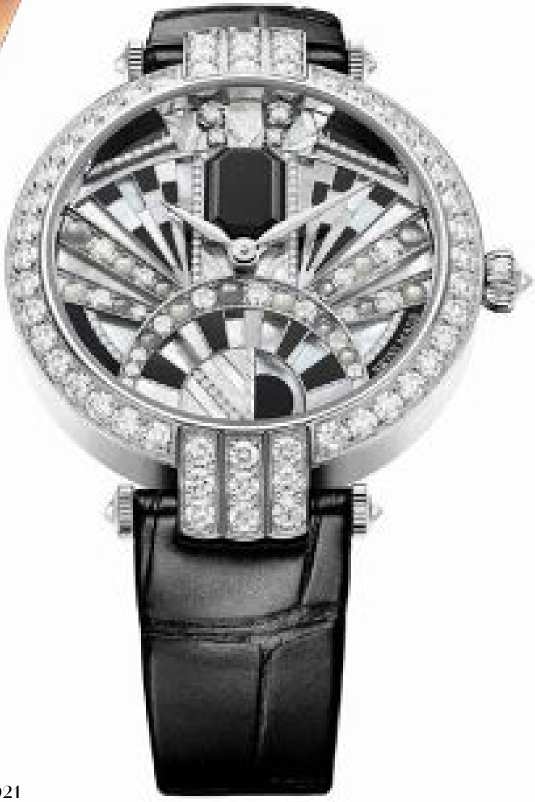




**TAG HEUER**

## Carrera Chronograph Jack Heuer Birthday Gold Limited edition

Inspired by Jack Heuer's favorite watch the iconic vintage Heuer Carrera 1158CHN, is an elegant 42mm chronograph made from 18 carat rose gold. The centre of its silver opaline dial sports a duo of infinity loops that symbolise Jack Heuer's birthday and his infinitely precious legacy. Powering this limited edition model is Calibre Heuer 02 manufacture movement.



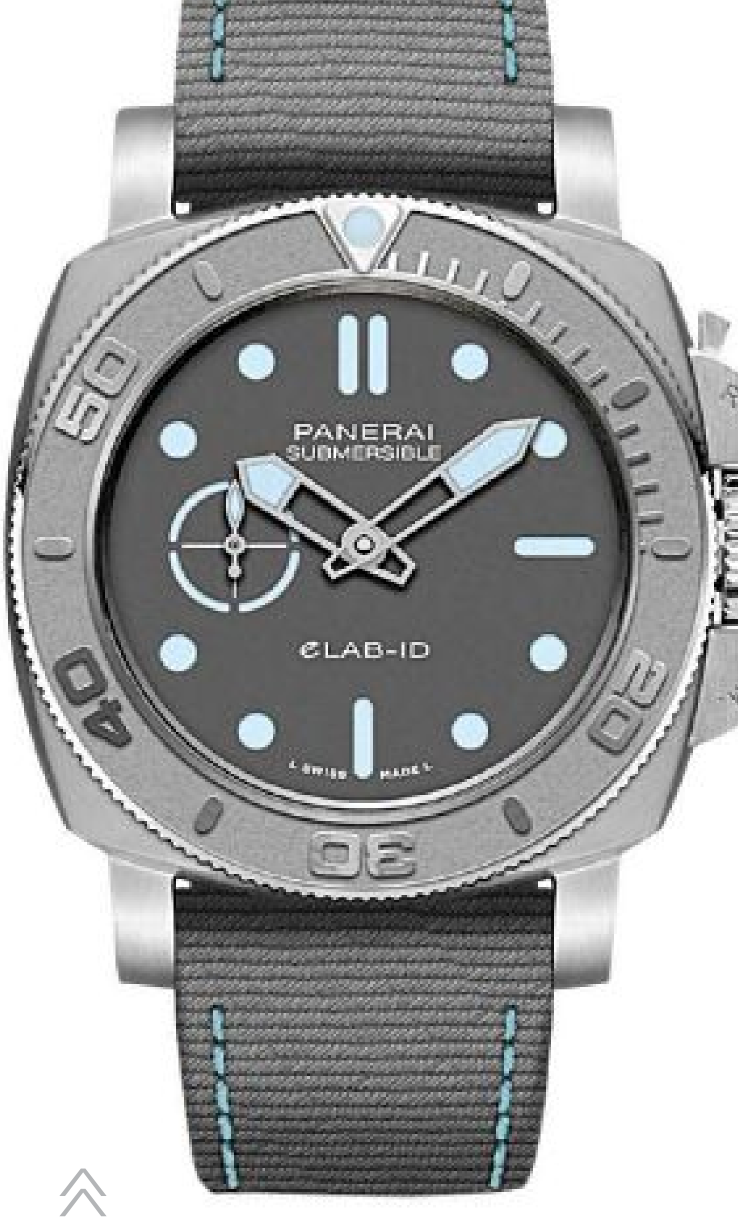
**HARRY WINSTON**

## Premier Majestic Art Deco Automatic 36mm

Art Deco styles inspired generations after it, and Harry Winston pays homage to this phenomenal French era of design. The Premier Majestic Art Deco comes in a White Gold case with a geometric layout that is studded with diamonds, mother-of-pearl, and black jade.

# ECO WARRIORS

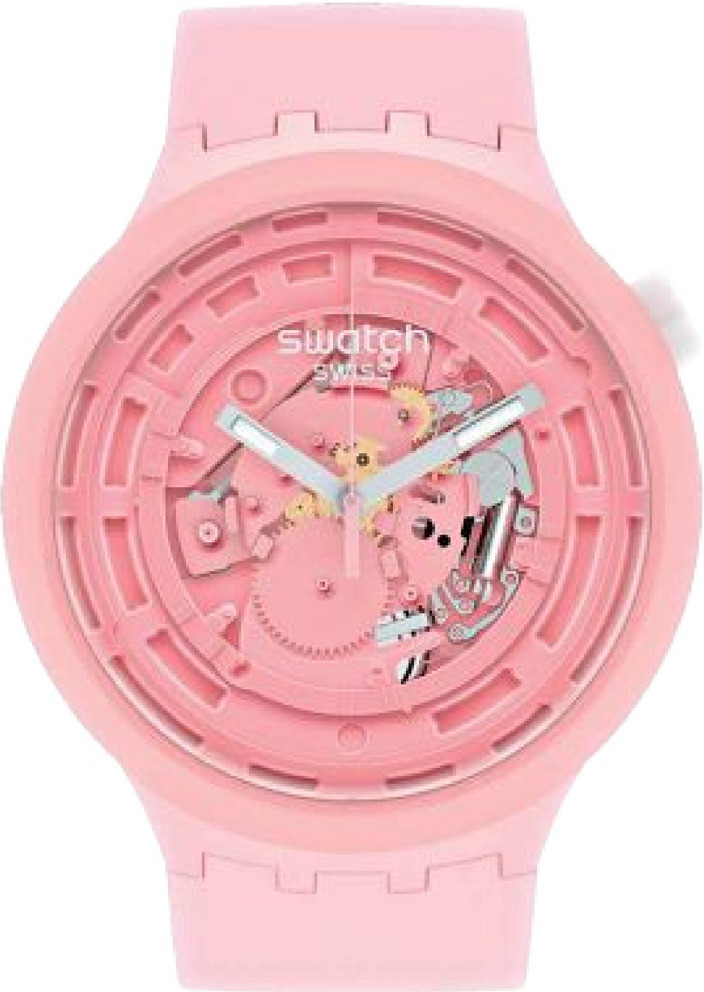
Going beyond precious metals, these unique watches are made from recycled materials and have a minimal carbon footprint.



**PANERAI**

## Ecologico E-LabID

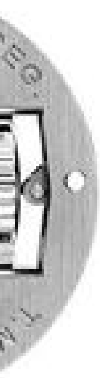
Here's a Panerai that's almost completely recycled, with 98.6 per cent of its mass derived from repurposed materials. This Submersible variant is water-resistant up to 300 metres, has a case and dial made from aerospace-grade titanium, and sports a sandwich dial. The Recycled Super-Lumi Nova glistens in the dark, while the recycled Grigio Roccia fabric strap with light-blue stitching complements it.



**SWATCH**

## Bioceramic Big Bold

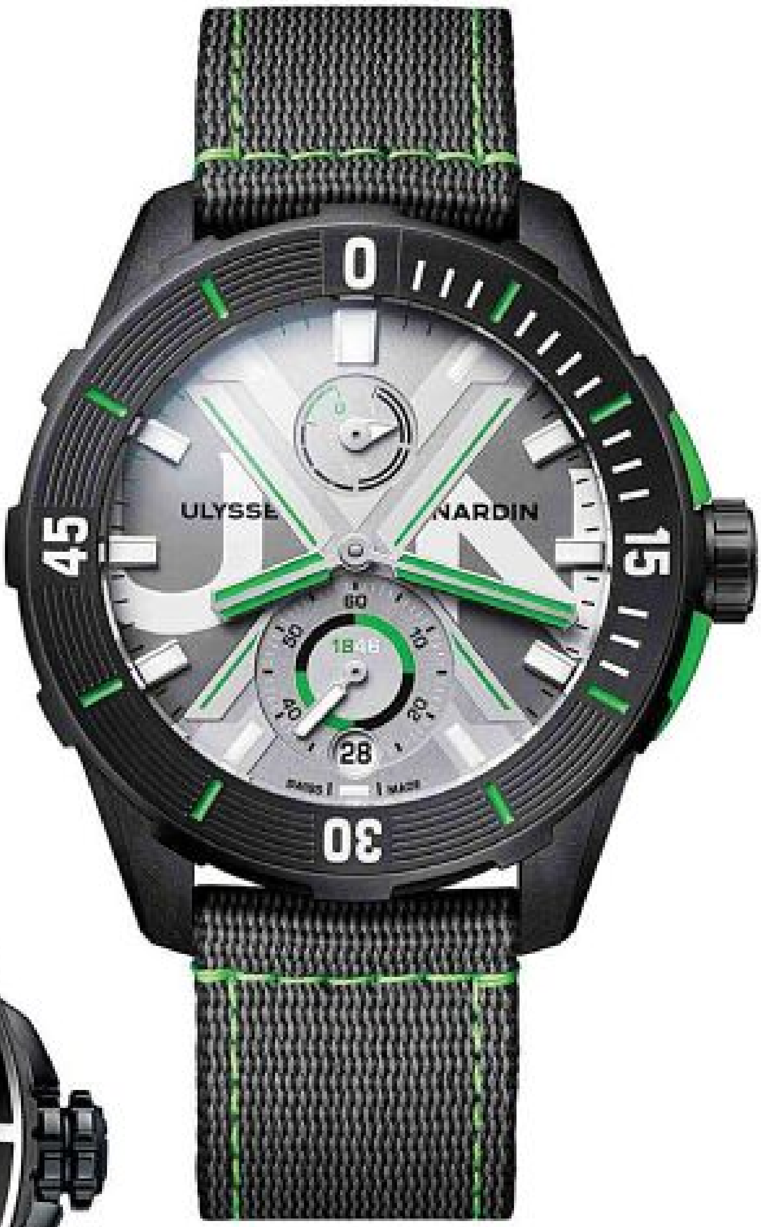
Using a plant-based plastic composite in the build of a watch is more of a statement than courage. Dominated with pastel colours, the open-work dial looks elegantly camouflaged in the sky blue and power pink variants. You can also get it in subdued black, white, or grey.

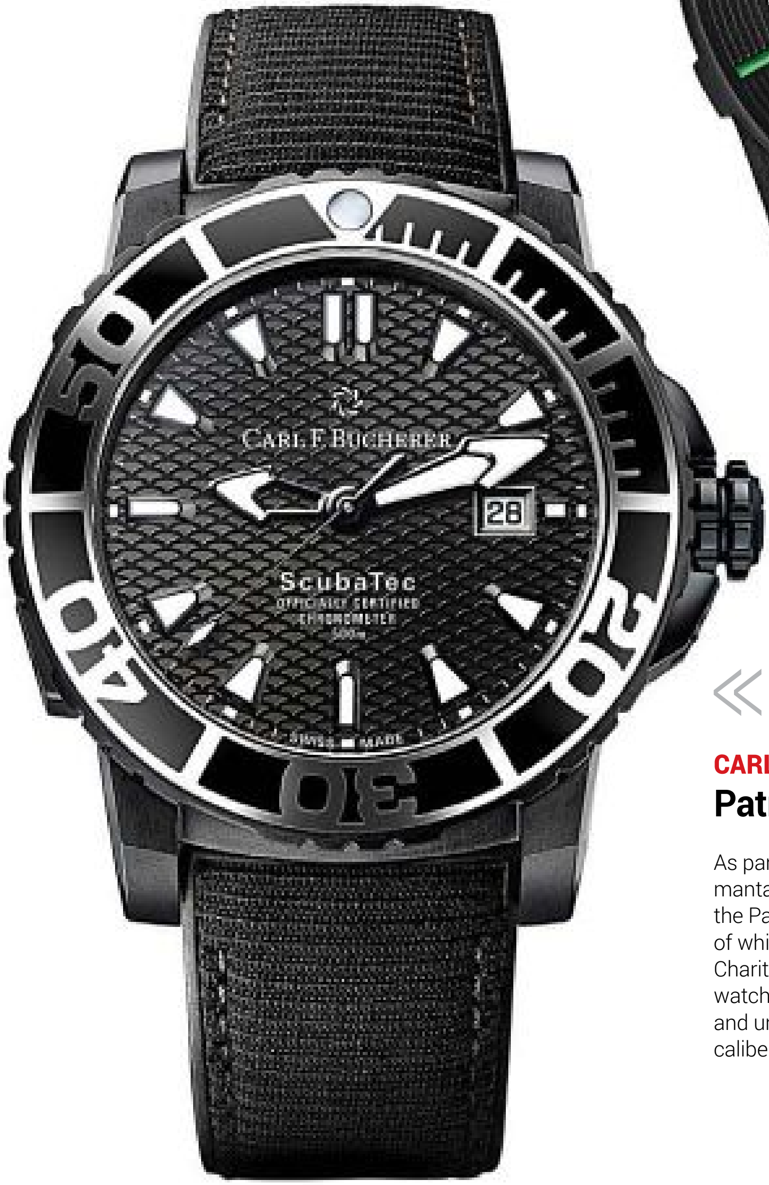


**ULYSEE NARDIN**

## Divers Net

Ulysee Nardin has focussed its research and attention towards ocean conservation and the result is a concept watch that sports the R-Strap, made of recycled fishing nets. Soon, the brand aims to introduce a ceramic glass crystal that should replace traditional sapphire glass.





**CARL F BUCHERER**

## Patravi Scubatec

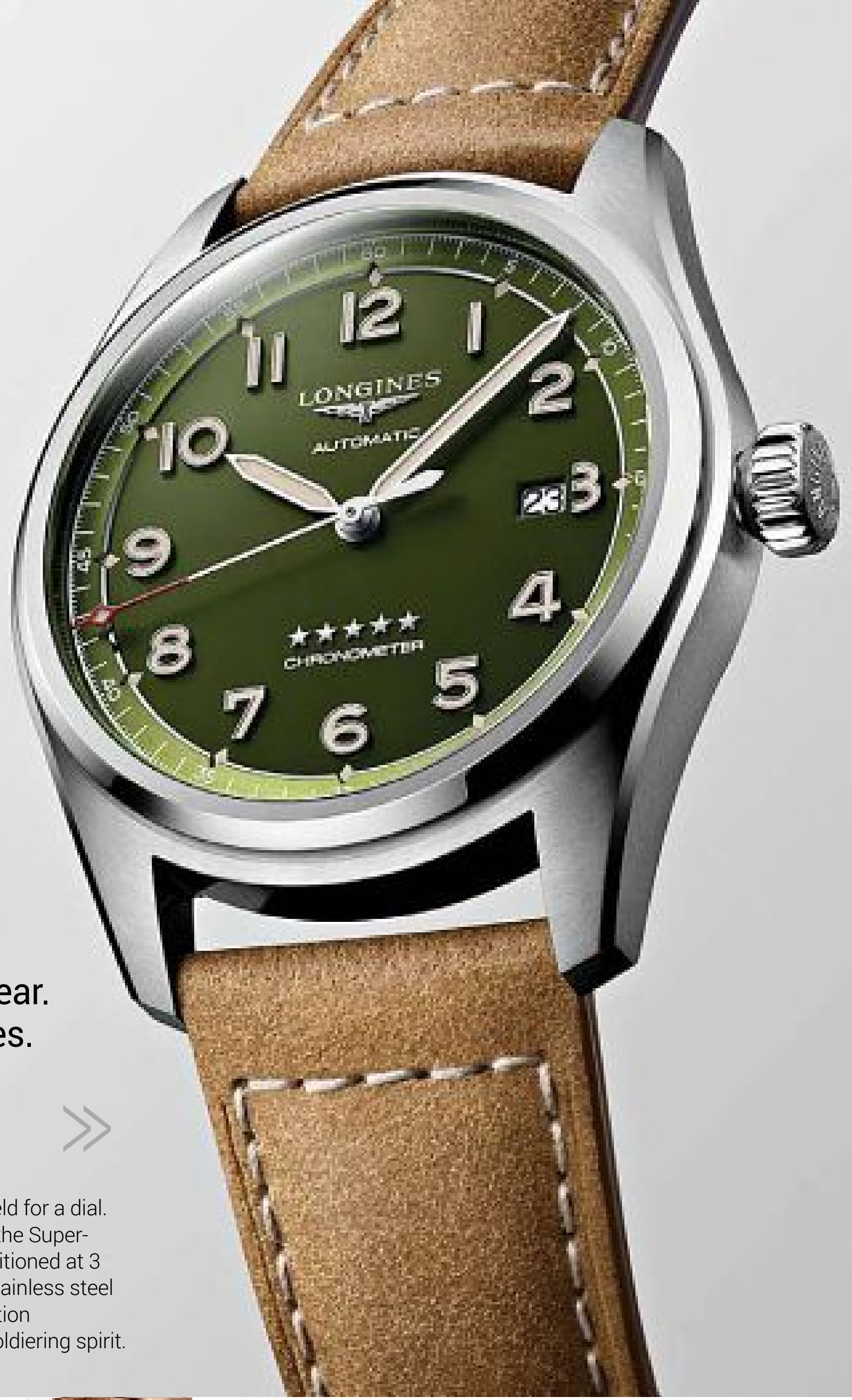
As part of its mission to protect the mantas, Carl F Bucherer has introduced the Patravi Scubatec, the proceeds of which sponsor the Manta Trust Charitable organisation. The automatic watch is exclusively made for diving and underwater expeditions with the caliber CFB 1950.1 movement.

WATCH SPECIAL 2021

TRENDING NOW

# ENVY PICKS A COLOUR

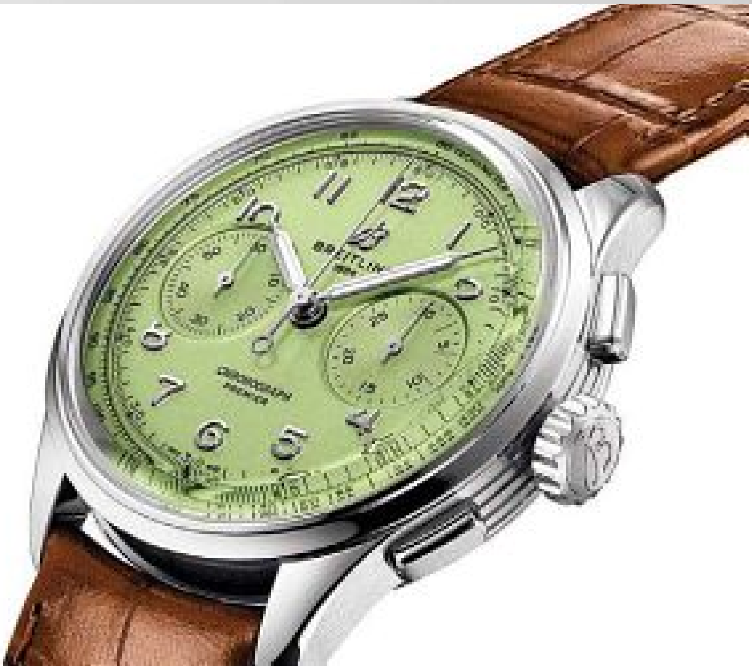
Green dials are all the rage this year. Here are the more irresistible ones.



**LONGINES**

## Spirit Green

Longines introduced its legendary Spirit with a green field for a dial. The green combines beautifully with the beige hues of the Super-Luminova markers giving it a retro vibe. The date is positioned at 3 o'clock. It comes with a beige leather strap or a 3-link stainless steel bracelet with a triple folding clasp. The colour combination reminiscent of battle fatigues is sure to harness your soldiering spirit.



**BREITLING**

## Premier Heritage B09 Chronograph 40

The stainless steel case with a pistachio green dial in a Breitling is far too irresistible a proposition to pass off lightly. Combining complications such as a chronograph, a duograph, and the Datora, the watch is a homage to the creators of the indomitable Premier range.

**BLANCPAIN**

## Villeret Extraplate Boutique Edition

Blancpain has created among the most elegant combinations of green and gold in the Villeret Extraplate Boutique watch. The traditional cut-out sage leaf-shaped hands are made of gold and are powered by the Blancpain 1151 calibre. The neat Roman numerals and the date at 3 o'clock look fantastic. The watch is worn with a brown nubuck alligator leather strap.

BLANCPAIN
31

**TAG HEUER**

## Monaco Green

Paying homage to the Monaco Grand Prix, Tag Heuer creates a never-before-seen dial in deep green. The watch is unapologetically square with black square sub-dials at 3 and 9 o'clock and a date window at 6 o'clock. It has a 39mm brushed steel case; racy and robust too, now that's a keeper.

MONACO
TAG HEUER
AUTOMATIC

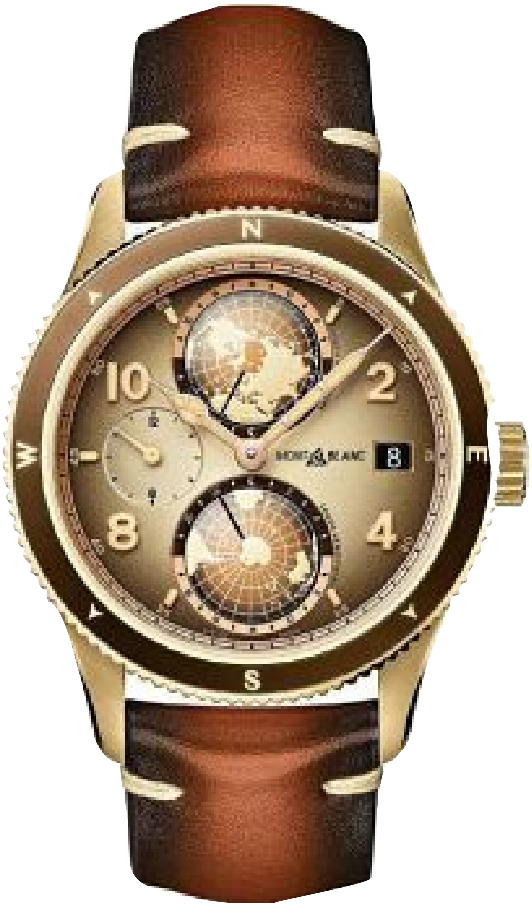
**JAEGER-LECOULTRE**

## Reverso Tribute Small Seconds

Keeping the green theme alive this year is JLC's Reverso, which celebrated nine decades of existence. From braving a game of polo to making fashion statements today, the iconic reversible steel case measures over 45mm and is held by an attractive green calf strap

# LICENCE TO THRILL

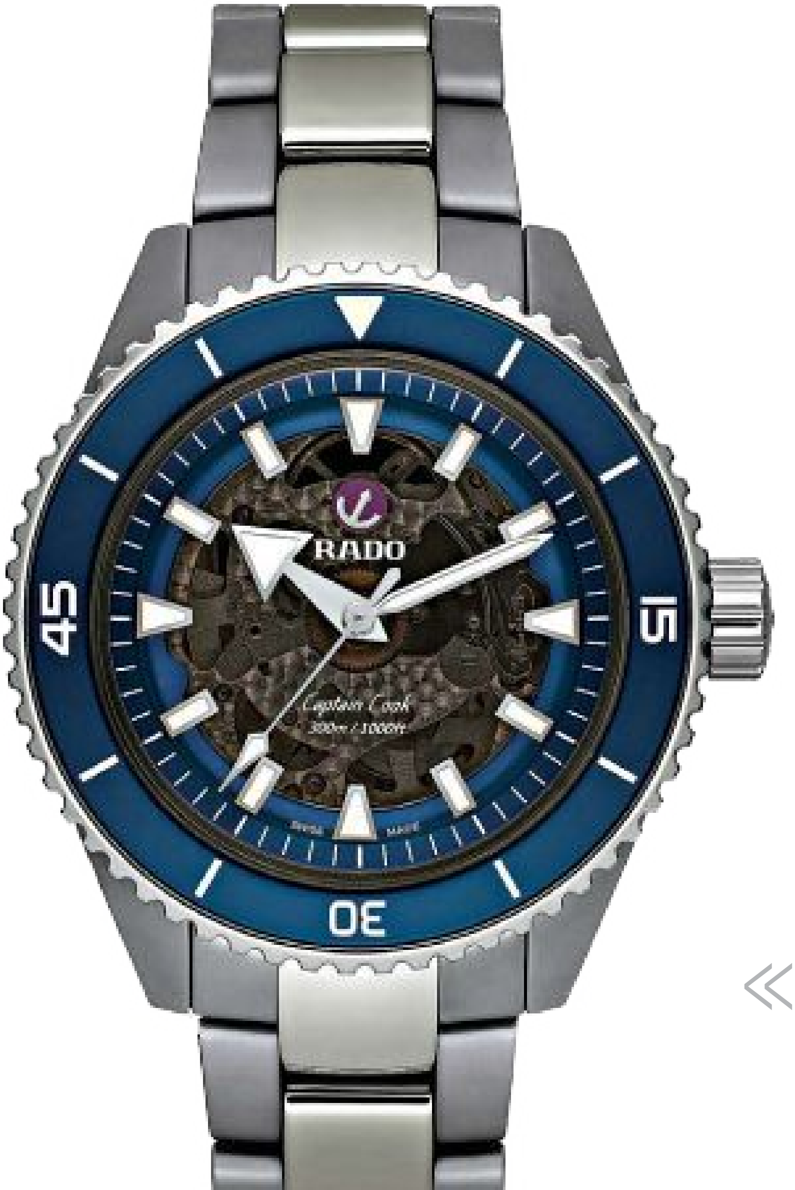
Rugged and functional, these are your go-to timepieces that fulfill your nomadic instincts



**MONTBLANC**

## 1858 Geosphere Limited Edition 1858

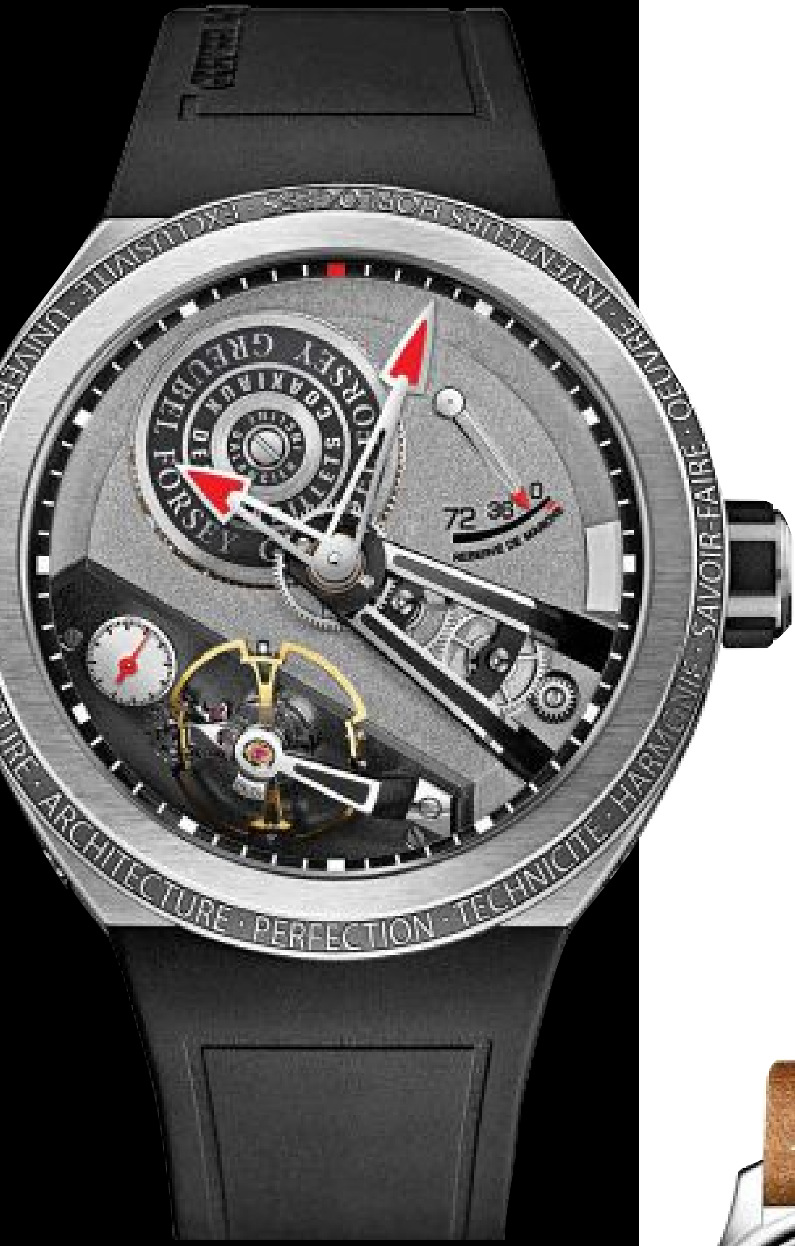
Designed to be the fantasy of every explorer, the 1858 Geosphere from Montblanc is inspired by the colours of the Gobi Desert. The satin-finished bronze case has a spiral engraving on its back and is worn with a brown Sfumato calf strap. The dial comes in smoked brown and beige lacquered with Northern and Southern Hemispheres with day/night indication. It's time to pay heed to that wandering spirit.



**RADO**

## Captain Cook High-Tech Ceramic

Rado calls this watch its more stellar achievement and it can be vouched for. The brand's innovative high-tech ceramic monobloc case construction is a defining feature. The ceramic is hypoallergenic and scratch-resistant making it a rugged companion for the outdoors. It is powered by a Rado calibre R734 movement with a power reserve of 80 hours.



**GREUBEL FORSEY**

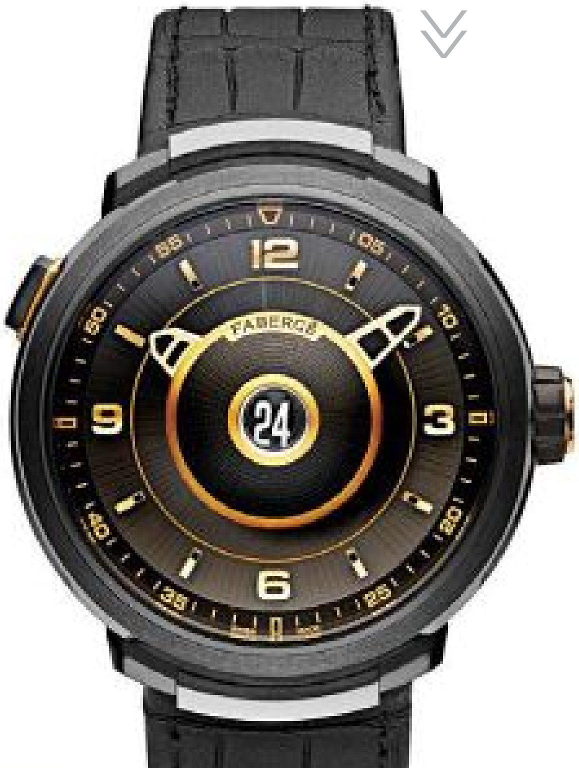
## Balancier S

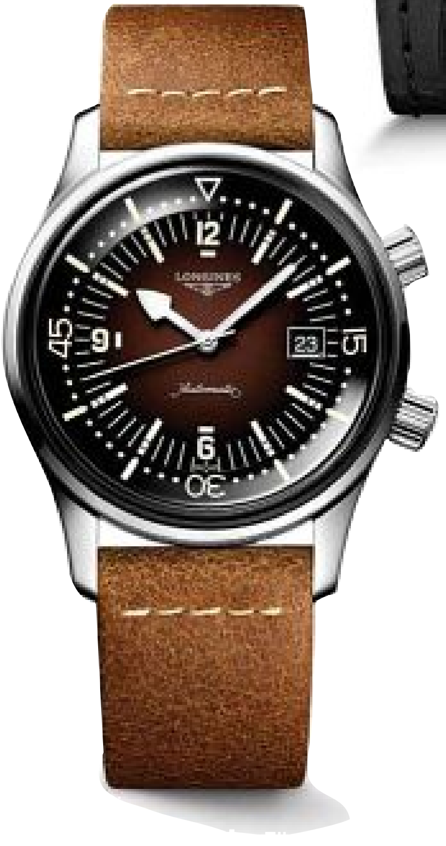
Bearing a more radical case design than we're used to in a luxury sports watch, the titanium ensemble in the Balancier S seems to bulge and ebb. It sports 3D variable geometry indexes with lacquered hour and minute indexes. It has a 72-hour power reserve.

**FABERGÉ**

## Visionnaire DTZ

Swiss manufacture Agenhor has teamed up with Fabergé to create the mystical 43mm Visionnaire DTZ. The hours and minutes are mounted on discs, which can be pushed out to display the hour and second time zone, displayed in the middle aperture. It's like horological magic.





**LONGINES**

## Legend Diver Watch

This year the Longines Legend Diver Watch, which is a prized pick for divers has taken on new colours. You can get it in blue or brown with a box-shaped sapphire glass, two screw-in crowns, and a screw-down case-back. These are water-resistant till 300 metres.

# SMALL MARVELS

Classic and new models boast shrunken dials to prove that the best things do come in small packages

**ROLEX**

## New Rolex Explorer 36

Rolex dropped two 36mm Explorers earlier this year—one with the classic stainless steel and the other, a less modest, first-time-ever blend of Oystersteel and 18-carat yellow gold. Both carry the iconic "3, 6, and 9" dial of the crown, and feature the industry-best calibre 3230 movement and a 70-hour power reserve.

**HERMES**

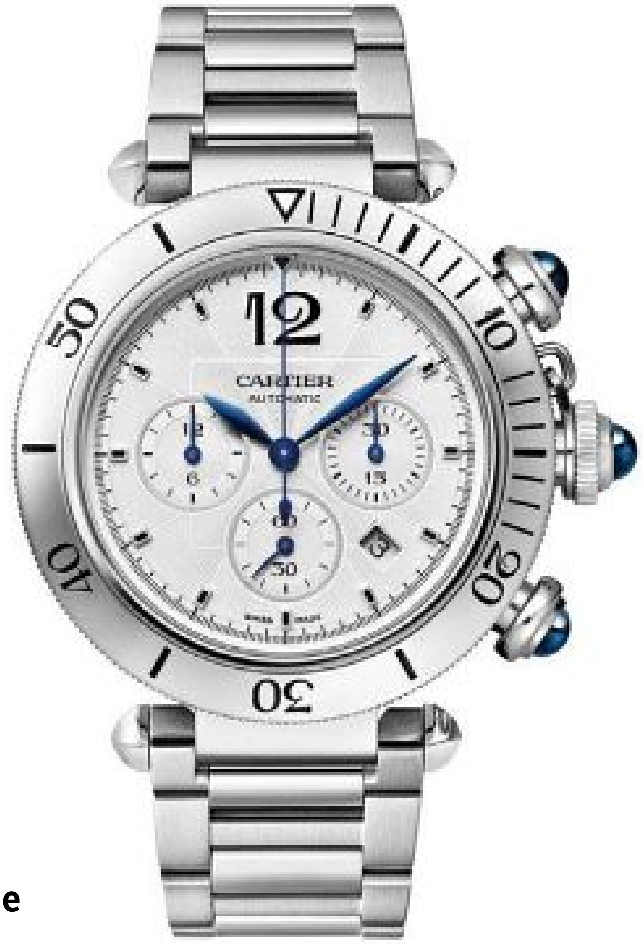
## H08 Automatic

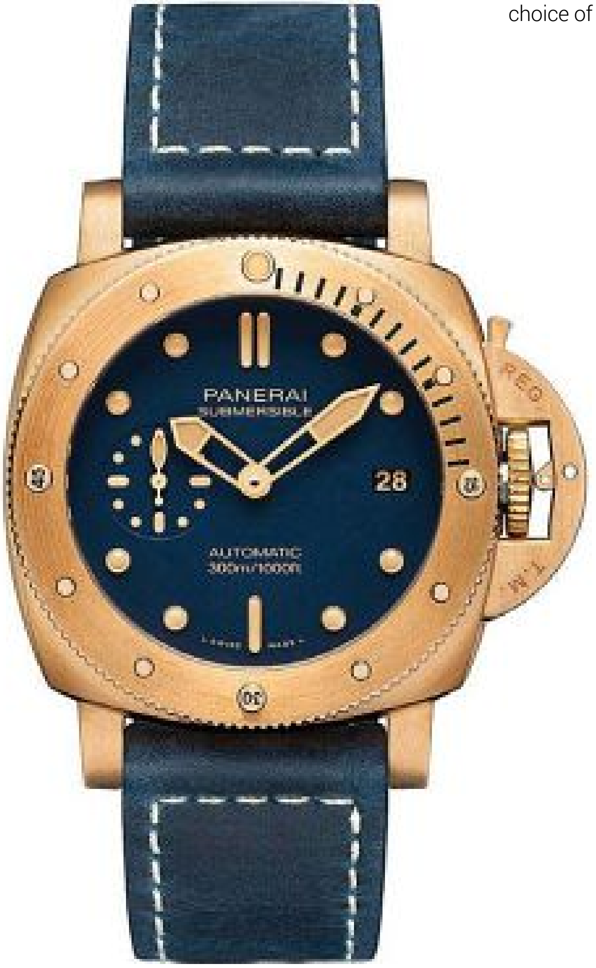
The 39mm automatic H08 from Hermes landed this year with its sport demeanour. The cushion-shaped case and radially brushed bezel are quite likeable. It comes in titanium, graphene composite, and DLC-coated titanium. The composite version is the lightest of the three.

**CARTIER**

## Pasha de Cartier (30mm) – Chrono

Cartier's 30mm Pasha de Cartier women's watch is more ornament than watch. It comes with a quartz movement and in three styles—Steel, Pink Gold, and Pink Gold, the latter is set with 42 diamonds. There's a choice of bracelets too.





**PANERAI**

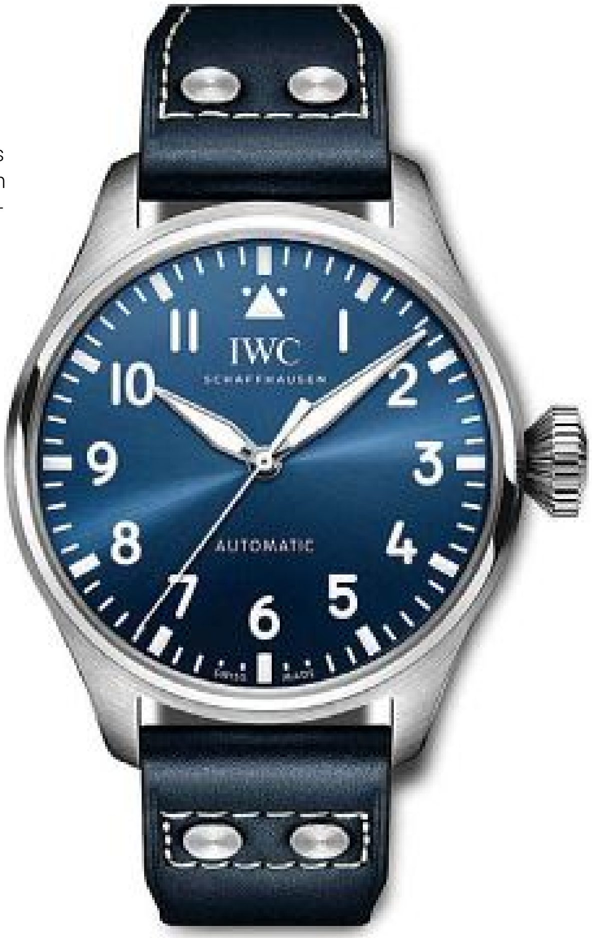
## Submersible Bronzo Blu Abisso PAM01074

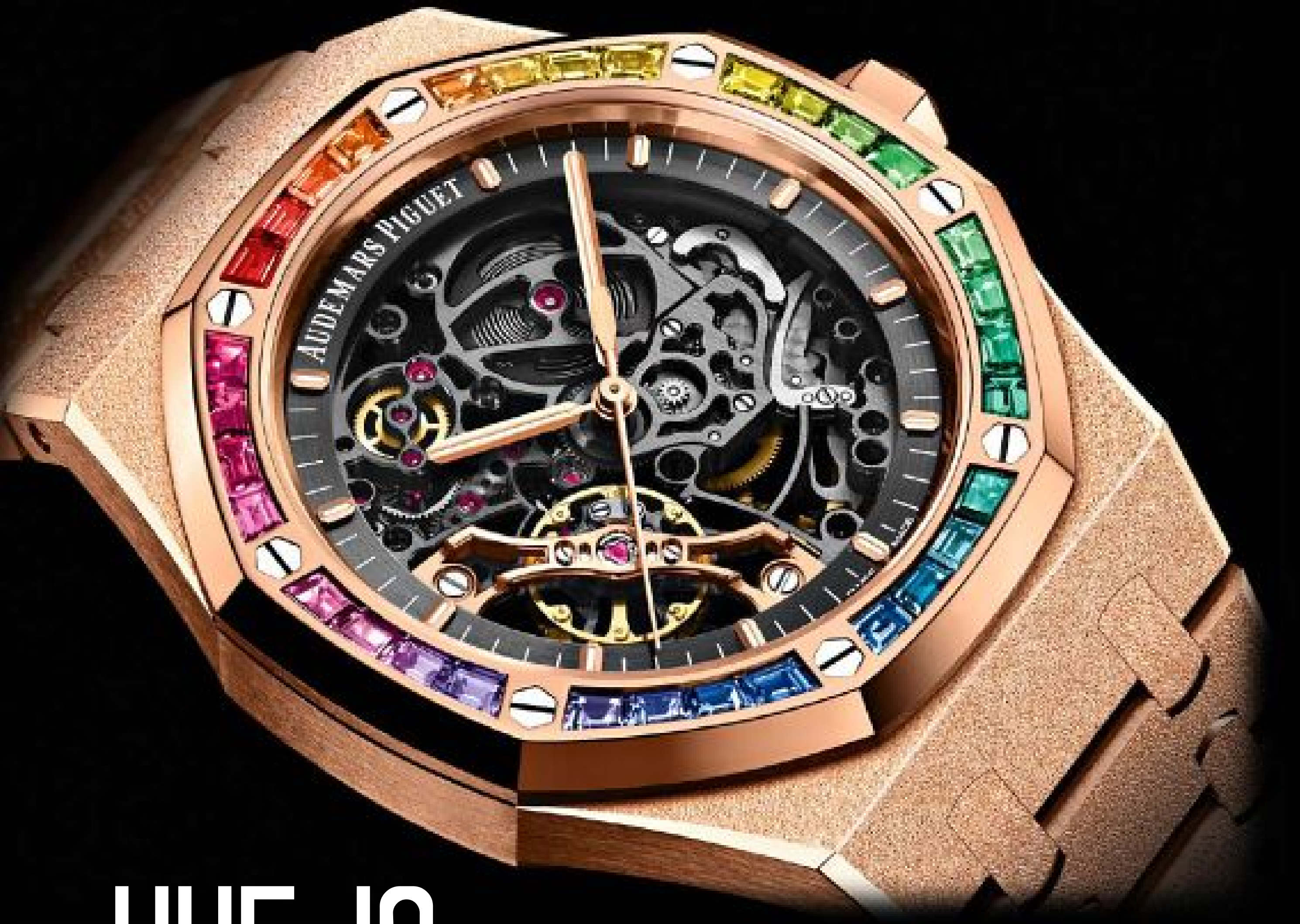
Trimming down from 47mm to 42mm is the PAM01074 watch, pleasing more wrists. It comes with the distinctive crown guard system and is submergible up to 300m. It's awash in bronze with a dark blue dial that sports a small 'seconds' hand and date.

**IWC**

## Big Pilot Watch 43

IWC has slimmed down the Big Pilot to a 43mm case this year. It lacks the usual 7-day power reserve but packs the new calibre 82100 IWC movement. There are versions available---blue and black with a strap, and a blue version with a bracelet.





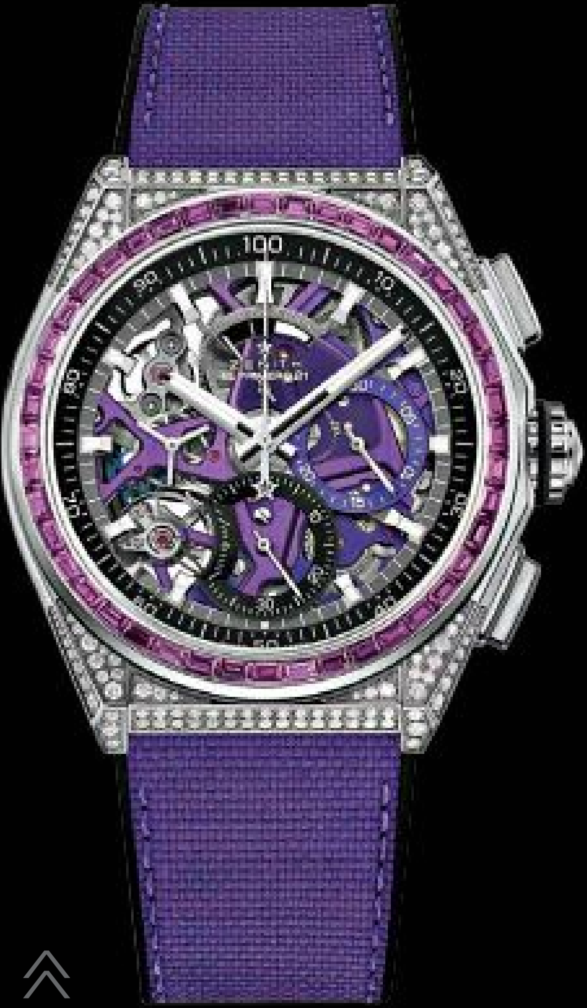
# HUE IS THE CUE

Studded with gems and diamonds these timepieces take casual to a livelier level

**AUDEMARS PIGUET**

## Royal Oak Frosted Gold Double Balance "Rainbow"

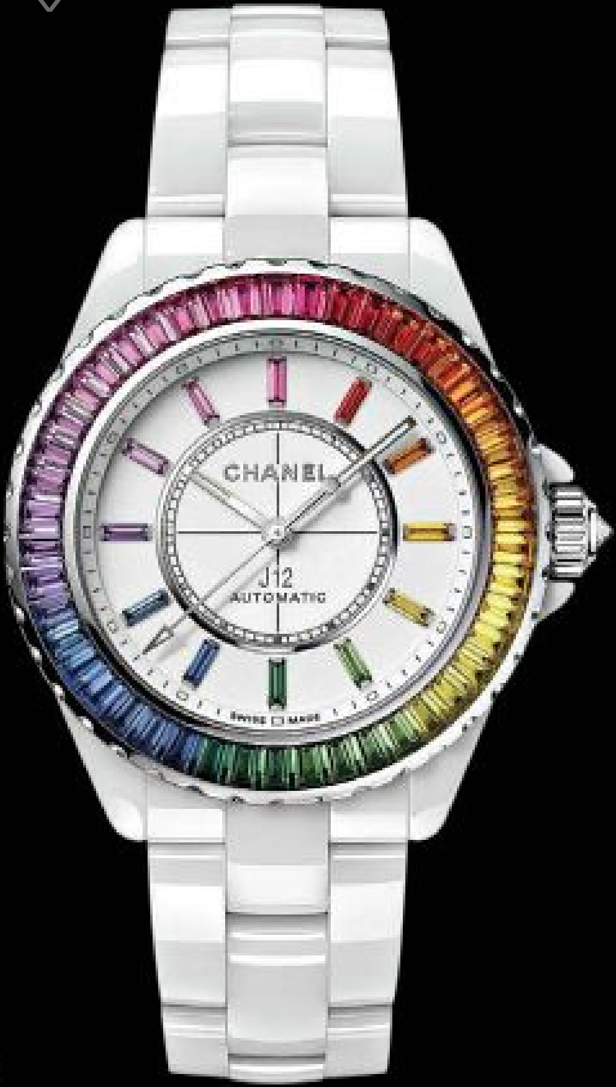
With a peripheral arrangement of gems defining a rainbow on the bezel and a frosted gold case build, this is one of the most charismatic Royal Oaks ever created. The 41mm case shows off its open-work that is decorated with the twin-oscillator movement. The octagonal bezel is studded with rubies, emeralds, and sapphires in different hues, creating the magic of the rainbow spectrum. The attractive NAC coat gives the innards of the watch a beautifully contrasting dark grey finish. The matching 18-carat completes this captivating ensemble. The 'Rainbow' is powered by a calibre 3132 movement and offers a 45-hour power reserve.



**CHANEL**

## J12 Electro "Rainbow"

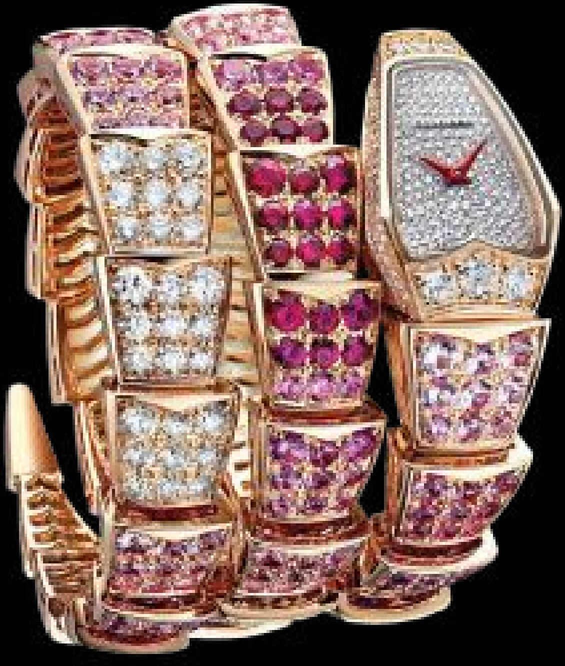
Chanel infused the magic of the rainbow into its all-ceramic watch this year. The J12 Electro 'Rainbow' collection is made up of quartz watches, mechanical ones, and even a 12-piece set that has every colour on the spectrum. It's an ideal gift box for the whimsical aesthete.



**ZENITH**

## Defy Spectrum

Zenith ditched the idea of a colourful dial and instead coloured up its El Primero 21 chronograph movement with a PVD treatment and gemstones. The gem-set bezel gets 44 baguette-cut precious stones and comes in green, orange, blue, purple, and black with matching stones.



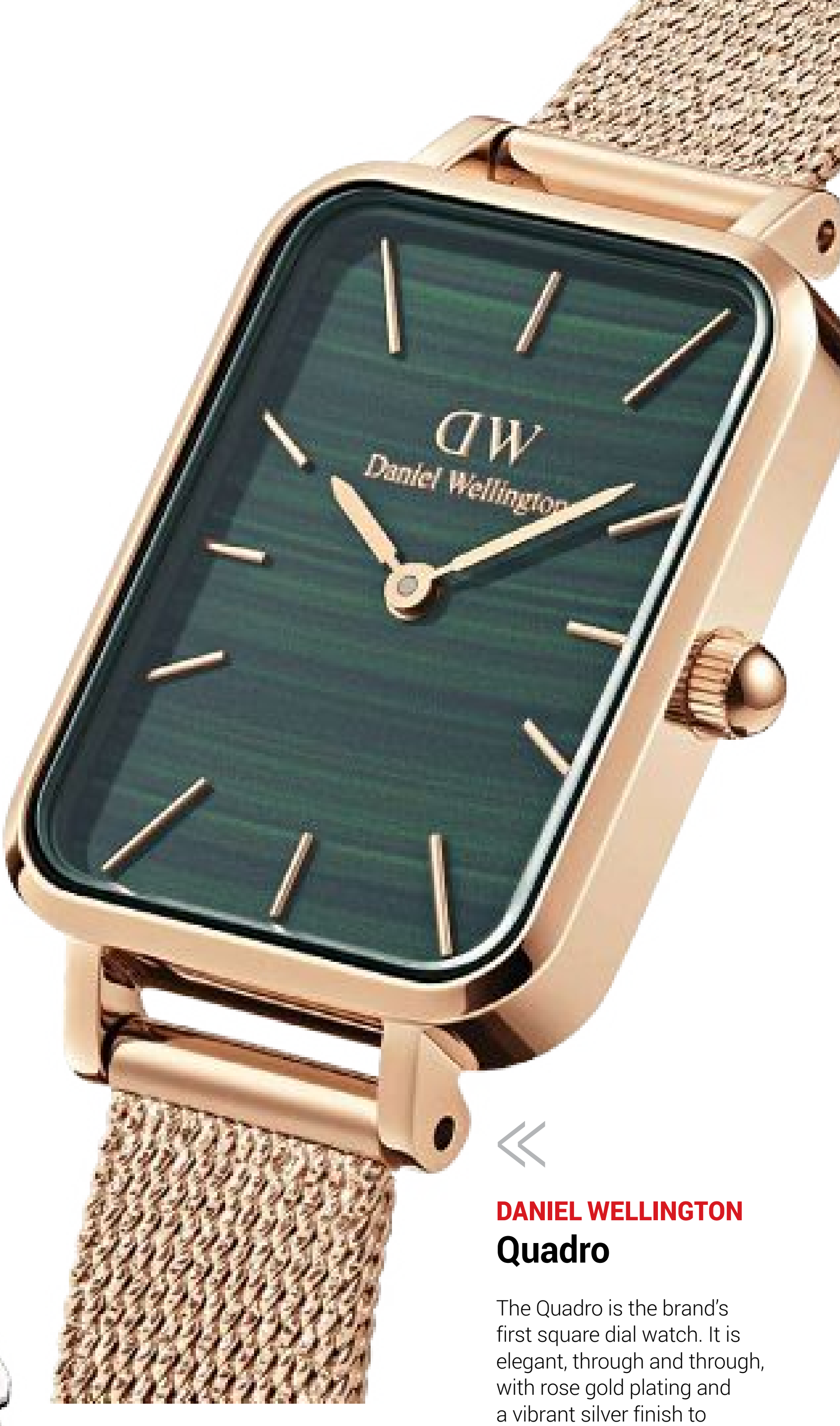
**BULGARI**

## Serpenti Viper Rainbow

Bulgari has brought its excellence in colour-blocked jewellery to create vibrant timepieces. The two-row bracelet watches come in round-cut diamonds, pink, purple and blue sapphires, red rubies, orange spinels, yellow sapphires, and green garnets and emeralds. There are three watches released within the rainbow series.

# FASHION FORWARD

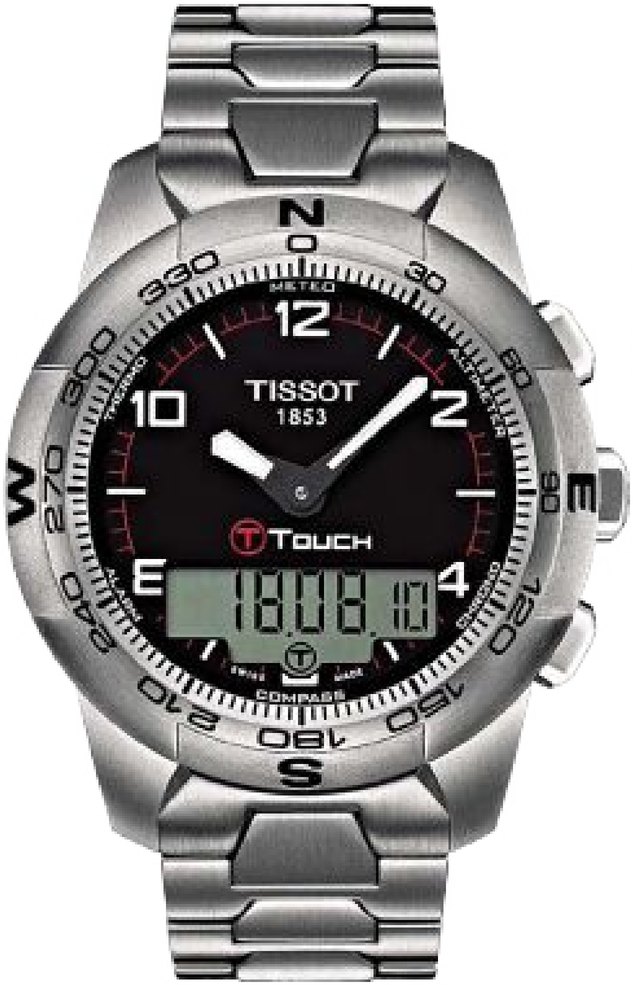
Beyond the safe margins of diamonds and precious metals, these timepieces will ramp up your style quotient



**DANIEL WELLINGTON**

## Quadro

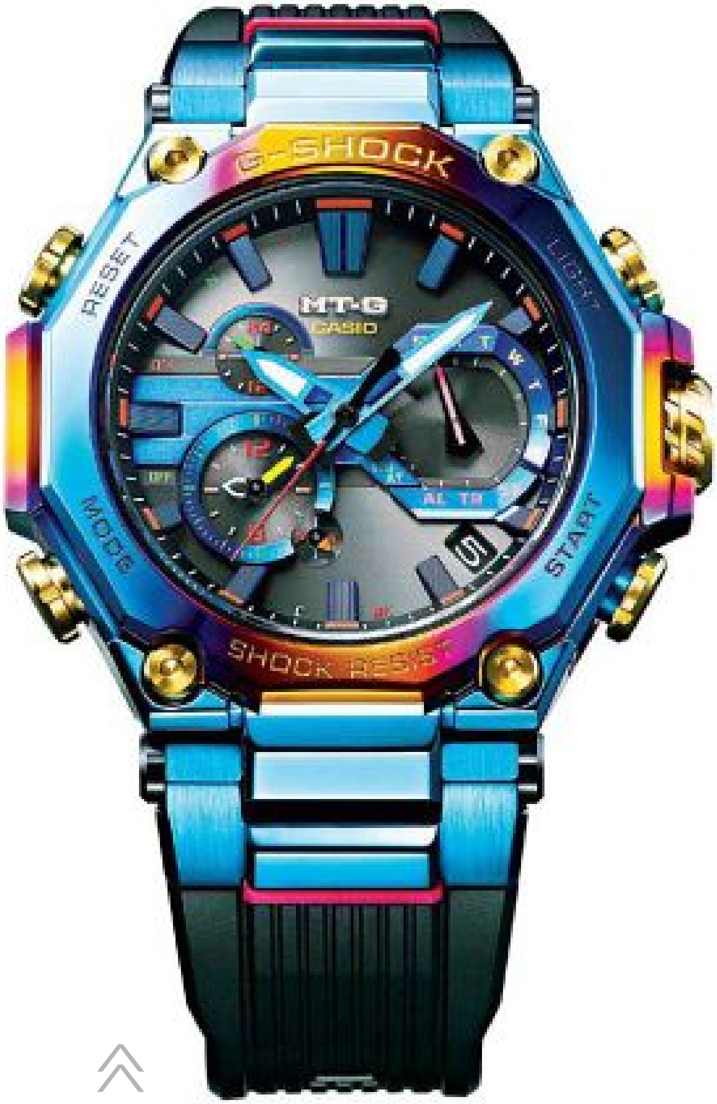
The Quadro is the brand's first square dial watch. It is elegant, through and through, with rose gold plating and a vibrant silver finish to choose from; other choices include white, black, or green patterned dials. The straps come in pressed mesh or pressed leather. Wear your style on your wrist now.



**TISSOT**

## T-Touch II Titanium

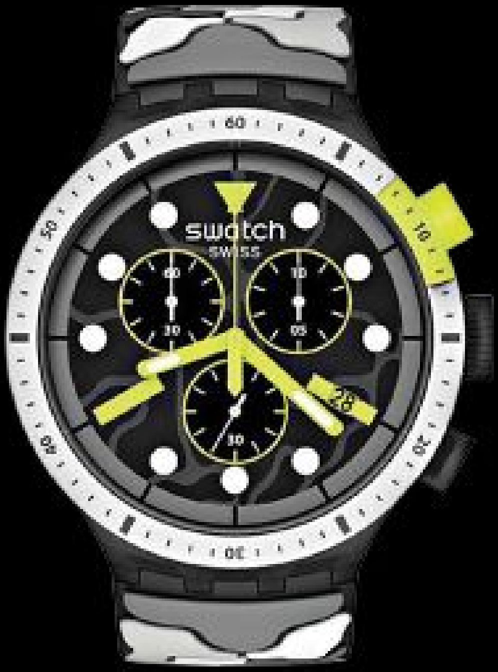
Blending in style with the functionality of Touch Technology, the T-Touch II is quite a performer too. The compass, forecast, altimeter, and 10-bar water pressure resistance make it the watch you want to don with your swimming trunks while vacationing at your private beach.



**CASIO**

## G-Shock MT-G MTGB2000PH2A Blue Phoenix

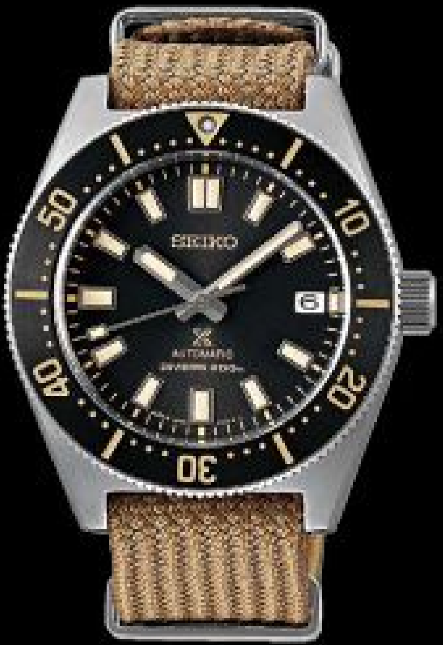
A Casio G-Shock has never been so colourful before. The Blue Phoenix joins the MT-G line with a stainless steel and carbon case. The rainbow finish on the case extends to the integrated bracelet that commands bolder shades of rich cobalt blue and deep violets.It has a 39mm brushed steel case; racy and robust too, now that's a keeper.



**SWATCH**

## Escape Chronograph

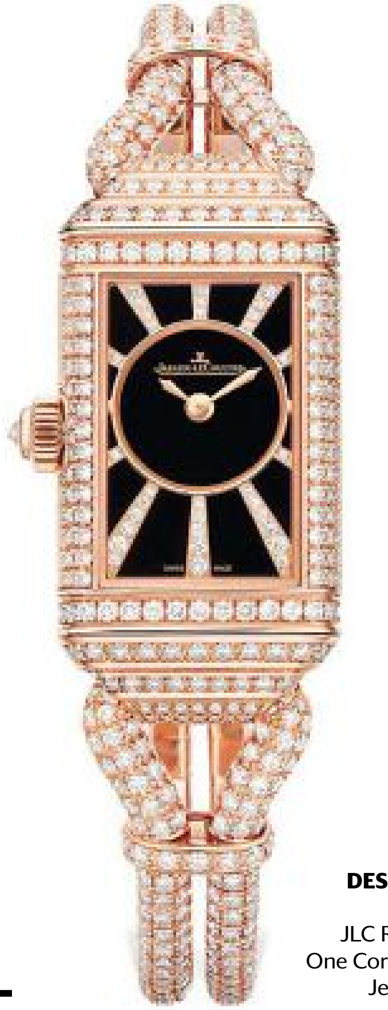
Swatch has introduced an intriguing series of four chronographs under the Escape line. Each of them pays homage to one of Oceans, Jungles, Deserts, or Arctics and is respectively christened as such. They all use a quartz chronograph movement with running seconds and a date window.



**SEIKO**

## Prospex Diver's 1965

With new colours and straps, Seiko has reinterpreted its first divers watch under the Prospex line. Housed in a compact 40.5 mm case is a sunray-brushed dark brown dial with lumibrite material. The retro look is further accentuated with the NATO-inspired nylon straps. Harness your vintage alter ego.



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**DESTINY'S CHILD**
JLC Reverso One Cordonnet Jewellery

# "THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PIECE FROM CONCEPTION TO CREATION TAKES ABOUT 18 MONTHS."

–CATHERINE RÉNIER (above), CEO OF JACQUES-DAVID LECOULTRE

**The Jacques-David Le Coultre 2021 Reverso One Cordonnet Duetto Jewellery is unapologetically opulent and desirably feminine**

By **DHIRAM SHAH**

In the 1930s, as even now, a watch was one's perpetual outdoor companion. There were instances, however, when people would have to shed this second skin, largely because the situations were perilous to these delicate glass-encased marvels. Around this time, a Swiss businessman César de Trey was approached by members of the British Army during his visit to India and was requested to create a watch that could withstand the bumps and beatings of an intense polo match. On returning to Paris, de Trey partnered with Jacques-David LeCoultre and that led to the creation of the brand's most phenomenal line of watches—the Reverso.

## Flip Squad

At its time of conception, the JLC Reverso was almost magical, with a case that could flip by manoeuvering over tracks like the pages of a book. Soon, the Reverso found itself going from the weather-bitten wrists of polo players to adorning the wrists of Amelia Earheart and King Edward VIII, because the back of the case, once flipped, could bear bespoke engraving and be worn as a badge of honour. Since then, the Reverso has traversed boundaries of gender and geographies to symbolise durability, style, and unapologetic luxury. The Art Deco style of the JLC Reverso is easily distinguishable in a crowd today, with elegant rectangular lines and clear-cut gadroons adorning the case.

The 2021 Reverso One Cordonnet Duetto Jewellery adds the magic of intricate gem-setting to the rich history of the Reverso. The front dial is constructed with concentric rectangles that appear as layers within layers, each studded with jewels. The dial has fine Arabic numerals that are applied on the white mother-of-pearl base, which is framed by the inner rectangles. In the centre of the ensemble sits the geometric cut-out, which is framed with gold and offers a glance into the pave-set diamond field. It's only natural to be curious about what the reverse of this case could behold, and it doesn't disappoint. The back shows off a contrasting dial in black lacquer with diamond-set gold 'sunbeams' that radiate out from the centre, creating distinctly identifiable hour markers.

## Diamonds are Forever

The Reverso One CordonnetDuetto Jewellery is decked with 1,104 diamonds that are studded across the case and even the bracelet attachment. The bracelet seems to bear a unique sheen as the stones glisten in the sun and spotlight alike. Donning this watch could be an occasion in itself, with the excess that is as justifiable as it is sublime. The gem-setting process of this timepiece is magnificent. JLC employs the fascinating grain-setting technique to hold the diamonds in place, through which the diamonds are held in place by beads of gold, making them almost invisible. This also ensures that the stones are very close to one another, giving the illusion of a seamless layer of diamonds occupying the surface. "Setting gems on the bracelet alone takes up to 71 hours and for the case another 50 hours," said Catherine Rénier, CEO of Jacques-David LeCoultre. "The development of the piece (design, conception, creation of the prototype and final piece) takes about 18 months." This phenomenal feat is made possible by the master jewellery skills of La Grande Maison.

This special JLC Reverso is an ode to the women of 2021, who the brand hails as its everyday inspiration. It employs the Jacques-David LeCoultre Calibre 844 movement and comes with a manually-wound 38-hour power reserve. The pink gold and diamond-set case measures 36.3 x 18mm, which is well purposed for feminine wrists. This celebrated watch bears vivid testimony to Reverso's nine-decade long history, which is rife with surprises, innovative turns, and quite often, an opulent overture. What started of as an attempt to brave the elements has grown into an opportunity to sport two dials on a single watch. What remains the same is the allure of the fine horological excellence that nearly always brings with it the mark of history and superlative watch-making.

REVERSO
12
6

*

**DATE WITH HISTORY**
1931 Reverso black lacquered and bordeaux (Left); Red lacquered dial (Right)

**THE WAY FORWARD**
Panerai Submersible eLAB-ID; Panerai Luminor Marina eSteel (facing page)

# “THIS YEAR THE FOCUS HAS BEEN ON SUSTAINABILITY.”

**Jean-Marc Pontroué, CEO of Panerai, on the future of the watch industry and why the brand is opening up a whole new chapter by revisiting how they produce watches.**

By **DHIRAM SHAH**

# CEO SPEAK

INTERVIEW

A veteran of the haute horology industry, Jean-Marc Pontroué began his career in the leather goods industry. In his two decades with Richemont, he has worked with Montblanc, and before taking charge of Panerai in 2018 he headed Roger Dubuis for six years.

**What are your predictions for the watch industry in the next 2-3 years?**

We will hopefully see a strong return to normality very quickly; in countries where the covid cases are lower, we are already witnessing a swift and strong return to normalcy. People are very keen to meet again, celebrate again, and are longing for things to return to normal. I am very positive that as more and more people get vaccinated and things get back to normal the watch-making industry and Panerai will bounce back.

LUMINOR
MARINA
PANERAI
eSteel

**Panerai has always been on the front when it comes to material development, so what are the exciting developments for 2021 and beyond when it comes to exotic materials?**

This year the focus has been on sustainability and as a result, we have developed two new materials eco titanium and eco steel. We have also launched the Submersible e-LAB-ID concept that is the very first watch in the industry that is almost 100 per cent recycled—98.6 per cent to be precise. The case, the dial, and bridges are made from eco-titanium, whereas the hands and indices make use of 100 per cent recycled SuperLumiNova and the balance spring is made from fully recycled silicone. We work with 10 different suppliers from across the world and half of them are not even from the watch industry. At the same time, we are very happy and proud to push the concept of recycling thus far.

**The e-LAB-ID is a very interesting and promising product. Does it change the way Panerai weighs sustainability and aesthetics?**

The e-LAB-ID is a concept that is created by literally pushing the limits and it gives vision to what we want to achieve in the long term. It's more like a learning process for us. The watch industry has been producing watches using the same principles for 300 years now and today in 2021, we are opening a whole new chapter by revisiting how we produce our watches.

**How soon can we see a mainstream Panerai watch made from 100 per cent recycled materials?**

When we started this project the price point was not something that we had in mind. For example, the new Luminor Marina eSteel consists of 58.5 per cent recycled materials and it is priced at 8,500 Euros compared to 60,000 Euros for the Submersible e-LAB-ID concept. We are continuing to work on research and development to try and make our watches as sustainable as possible.

**Two years ago Panerai started selling watches with experiences, how has the response been?**

Experiences are very close to my heart, and it is something we will continue in the future as well. Owing to the current pandemic and travel restrictions, we had to postpone all the programmes and experiences till we begin to travel. The experiences have created a lot of interest: Two years back we had 33 people who joined us to do 48 hours of training with an elite unit of the Italian navy. We had 15 people who experienced diving in Tahiti, French Polynesia. All of them loved it. For the next year, we have designed around 6-8 unique experiences across the world.

**Do you foresee a future where retailers would be selling watches through traditional stores as well as retain virtual conferencing?**

Well, we are already thinking of the world in 2022 and I surely believe a Zoom call cannot replace any emotional feedback we get when we meet personally. However, the future of watch fairs and retail will be a mix of the physical presence and digital interviews like we are conducting now.

**Panerai has two boutiques in India, what are your plans for expansion and e-commerce?**

We are following the development of India very carefully. With its population, GDP growth, and increasing awareness, we believe India will become one of Panerai's largest markets in the years to come. Today, the brand is very strong in India and we have new boutiques planned for the immediate future. We will soon confirm an e-commerce presence in India as well.

# Beauty and the Best

Balancing both nature and nurture is not only possible but the only smart choice

By **GHAZAL ALAGH**
Co-Founder and Chief Innovation Officer, Mamaearth

Conscious consumerism is a term that has almost become symptomatic of our lives negotiating the 'New Normal'. Traditionally, we have given a lot of attention to making better and smarter choices in food, cars, banning single-use plastic, and more, but sustianability is a trend at its all-time high in the beauty industry. What began as a coversation starter has now evolved into a way of life for many millennials.

The industry is finally accepting that norms for standardized beauty are not confined to a certain body shape, skin tone, or hair type. The change is slow, but it is surely happening. While discounting a universal beauty ideal may take time, clean beauty products are rapidly becoming a preferred choice over chemical products. Beauty and personal care products contain some toxic chemicals that point to damaging effects on human physiology. For instance, phthalates are a key component of plastic, and these are extensively found in nail polish, lotions, and perfumes. So, consumers have begun to expect transparency in formulations, efficient recycling of packaging, use of non-toxic materials, and basic hygiene practices from brands.

## Shifting Paradigms

The shift to cleaner products is visible, with more people veering toward natural cosmetic resources and materials. The increasing environmental awareness within the beauty and health industry has given rise to a new niche in product man-

mamaearth
Onion Conditioner
FOR HAIR FALL CONTROL
mamaearth
Onion Hair
FOR HAIR FALL CONTROL

*

**CHOICE EQUALS CHANGE**
The shift to cleaner products is more visible now with more people opting for natural cosmetic resources and materials

ufacturing and packaging. Natural and organic beauty is unquestionably on the rise as the beauty industry focuses on sustainability by developing clear and effective environmental policies for their products.

Evolving consumers understand the damaging effects of toxins such as parabens, phthalates, sulphates, oxybenzone, triclosan and hydroquinone among others. that's why they appreciate brands that refrain from animal testing or are conscious about their plastic consumption. This drives demand for brands that are creating safe products and those that are conscious about the impact they have on the environment and society at large. Saying no to single-use plastic or re-using product tubs and jars as planters at home, or simply switchingoff unwanted electrical gadgets can go a long way.

## Choose Well; Live Smart

Globally, Seven Generations and The Honest Company are redefining the way we look at the beauty industry.Seven Generations has been at the sustainability forefront with their Renewable Revolution initiative, propagating the use of renewable sources of energy and adopting the Zero Waste challenge. Similarly, The Honest Company focuses on ingredient and material innovations prioritizing plant-based formulas and sustainable consumption for a lighter environmental footprint. Brands need to become mindful of these small steps that can have a greater impact on the world, whether it is opting for plant-based ingredients to innovating product lines to attract the new-age conscious consumers.

With Mamaearth, we are also trying to achieve a greater goal driven by the philosophy of 'Goodness Inside' and standing strong on honest, natural, and safe principles. With this vision, we have taken on initiatives through which we wish to contribute to society and the environment. With the alarming plastic pollution situation, we have pledged to be 'Plastic Positive'. We recycle more plastic than we use, and we have been recycling upwards of 700 metric tons of plastic in the last six months. Apart from that, we have recently launched our 'Plant Goodness' initiative, where we link every order made on the Mamaearth website to a tree we plant. Our objective is to plant 1 million trees by 2025. We are also certified 'Cruelty Free' by PETA, and are committed to #NoToxins in our products. Sustainable living is a matter of choice and is a way of life.

## LAST LOOK

# The Mark of an Icon

If diamonds carry the swag of forever, jewellery entices beauty with a touch of the eternal. And the latest Forevermark Icon™ Collection celebrates both with its distinctive 'icon' motif. With this collection, the brand has reimagined the icon in a new diamond jewellery line. Originally designed to represent the romance and brilliance of a star in the South African night sky, while also mirroring the outline of a diamond, it represents two everlasting symbols of forever.

The line of jewellery showcases delicate settings and motifs enhanced by the beauty of natural Forevermark diamonds; each design captivates with a unique interpretation of a timeless Icon. Intended as everyday jewellery that evokes a signature style and story, it includes sixty-two pieces comprising hooped earrings, chic cufflinks, asymmetric bangles, rings and pendants, crafted from 18 carat yellow, white and rose gold. Ornate openwork, colourful enamel applications, pavé set diamonds and various diamond shapes make these bejewelled beauties contemporary and effortless that can be worn individually or stacked and layered. What makes it even more beautiful and rare is that it is responsibly sourced. Now that is beauty with a soul.

www.forevermark.com

**Price** on request

**Availability** Brand stores

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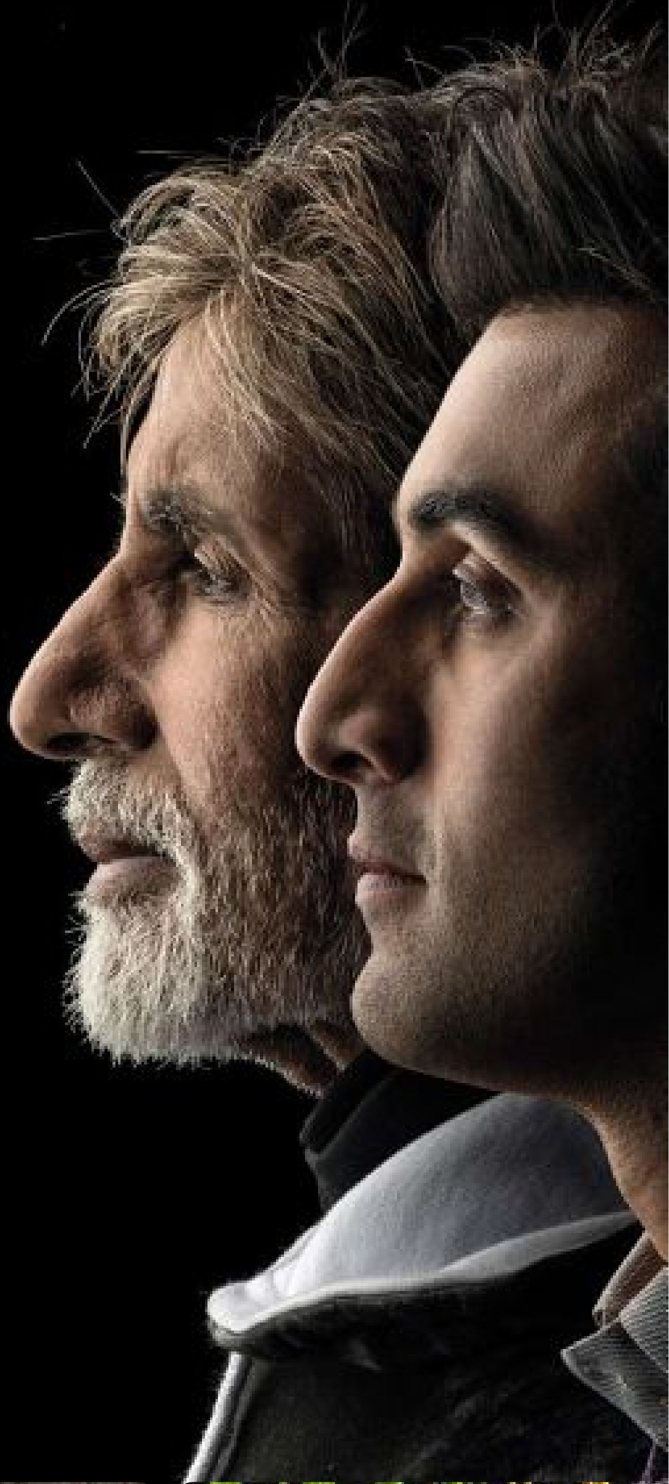

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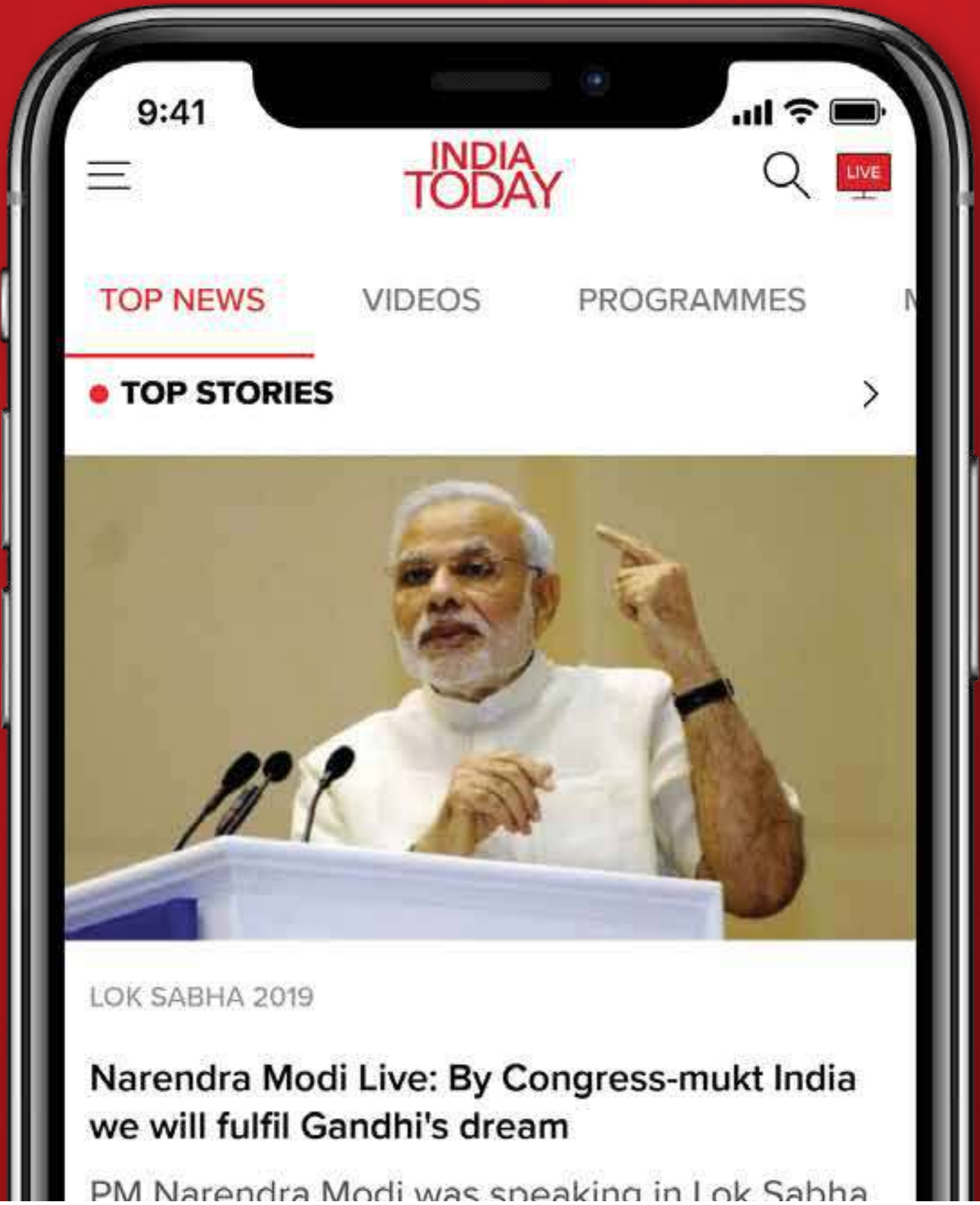
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